

WABU CLUB  
770 EASTMAN  
ST

WHEEL CLUB  
AND GOLF  
ON

PUBLIC LIBRARY  
KANSAS CITY  
MO

“Folks”

YARRELL'S LIBRARY  
YTD 2428A3  
OM



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK • BOSTON • CHICAGO • DALLAS  
ATLANTA • SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED

LONDON • BOMBAY • CALCUTTA  
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.  
TORONTO



PUBLIC LIBRARY  
"FOLKS"

NO by

VICTOR MURDOCK

New York  
The Macmillan Company  
1921

(All rights reserved.)

WABEEL CLARK  
VTD GARDEN  
ON

Copyright, 1921

By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published February, 1921.

9100.11  
1.000  
1.00

317310

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
JUST FOLKS . . . . .	1
THE FATHER OF A TOWN . . . . .	5
THE BEARDED GRAIN . . . . .	9
A FLOWER THAT GREW BETWEEN . . . . .	13
A CERTAIN FRONTIERSMAN . . . . .	17
THE ARTIST . . . . .	21
THE SCHOOL TEACHER . . . . .	25
THE BOOMER . . . . .	29
THE LAWYER . . . . .	33
THE LADY . . . . .	37
THE ACTOR . . . . .	41
THE PURE IN HEART . . . . .	45
THE MINISTER . . . . .	49
THE DOCTOR . . . . .	53
THE SCRIBE . . . . .	57
MY MOTHER . . . . .	61
MY FATHER . . . . .	66
THE MUSIC MASTER . . . . .	71
A FRIEND . . . . .	76
THE LEGISLATOR . . . . .	80
"THE PRISONER-AT-BAR" . . . . .	84
THE STATISTICIAN . . . . .	88
A MAN APART . . . . .	93
THE TORCH . . . . .	97
"THE REFORMER" . . . . .	102
THE GOVERNOR . . . . .	106
THE CONSERVATIVE . . . . .	110
A PRINCESS . . . . .	115
THE WIZARD . . . . .	120
A GENTLE MAN . . . . .	124

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
A RICH MAN . . . . .	128
THE ALLY . . . . .	132
THE RAINMAKER . . . . .	137
THE CAR DISPATCHER . . . . .	141
A TRADER . . . . .	146
A CATTLE BARON . . . . .	150
THE SALESMAN . . . . .	154
AN ARMY OFFICER . . . . .	158
THE MILLINER . . . . .	163
THE CAMPAIGNER . . . . .	167
THE OPTIMIST . . . . .	172
AN IMPRESSARIO . . . . .	176
THE VETERAN . . . . .	181
THE CONTRACTOR . . . . .	185
THE THINKER . . . . .	189
A HERALD . . . . .	194
THE CRUSADER . . . . .	198
THE CAPTAIN . . . . .	203
THE HISTORIAN . . . . .	208
THE RAILROADER . . . . .	212
THE FARMER . . . . .	217

# "FOLKS"

## JUST FOLKS

PERHAPS the title to this chronicle of some of the men and women I have known is best explained by an incident, the details of which were given me when I first went to Washington, many years ago.

Shortly after Mr. Roosevelt became president, he and the Vice-president, Mr. Fairbanks, touring the country in a special train, were delayed by a break in the locomotive in a rural spot in Indiana. President Roosevelt proposed to Mr. Fairbanks that, pending necessary mechanical repairs, they slip away from the others in the party and walk down a country road, which lay long and dusty before them.

Presently the tall, leisurely Vice-president and the shorter, quicker President, passed a field in the midst of which stood a stack of straw and on it a busy farmer.

Vice-president Fairbanks stepped to the fence and, beckoning with a long arm, cried: "Hey, there!"

The farmer, apparently not taking kindly to an interruption on a busy day, rested from his labors for a moment, surveyed the visitors indifferently and cried back with some asperity: "Hey yourself!"

About to continue with the chore, the farmer, seeing the tall man still beckoning, changed his mind, left his fork in the stack, and sliding down, came across the field to the fence, with the brisk air of one who had proposed to himself to waste little time on loiterers.

So that the farmer as he came across the field kept

the taller visitor in his eye and took no particular note of the other.

At the fence he identified the Vice-president and then doubted: "Fairbanks?" he asked, "Vice-president Fairbanks? The Vice-president of the United States?"

The two shook hands in confirmation of this identification, and then the Vice-president, indicating with his hand the presence of his companion, said in the slow speech which was his wont: "There is the President of the United States."

The farmer, with the bars of incredulity down, instantly put them up again, and turned to the President, and said slowly in awakening surprise: "Roosevelt?" And when the President extended his hand, the farmer brushed his doubt away and cried: "Theodore Roosevelt."

Instantly recovering, then, some of his energetic manner, the farmer took the initiative. He squared his shoulders, surveyed his guests again and asked with vigor:

"Well, how on earth did you two men ever get out here at this time of day?"

They explained the broken locomotive and the delay and their need of exercise.

"I want you to come down to my house for dinner," said the farmer with enthusiasm.

They explained they had dined. Then the Vice-president, seeing the farmer's disappointment, asked the farmer if he happened to have buttermilk at the house. Of course the farmer had buttermilk at the house. So he led his two distinguished callers to his home, glowing with the thought of the surprise he was to give his family.

Arrived at the house, the farmer notified the members of his household of his capture, hauled chairs out

to the veranda, arranged them in a circle, busied himself with the buttermilk and urged the family to make haste.

The women of the family, after delay, came down and, following introductions, joined the circle. Over the buttermilk the conversation began.

What did they talk about? They talked a little of everything. They talked soil, and crops and prices and how these compared this year with last; about horses, and cows and hogs and chickens, and the most profitable breeds; about the congressman from that particular district and who his predecessors were, back to the period of the Civil war; about Oliver P. Morton, who was the war governor of Indiana and Godlovus Orth who had a chance to be governor but missed it. They talked land values, taxes and tenantry, the question of hired help, the drift of the younger generation to the cities, and discussed ways to stop it. They talked schools, and teachers and children—and the names of girl-babies, the desirability of the good old homely names and the vogue of the fancy ones borrowed from the heroines in modern novels. They talked the disappearance of home-made things—home-spun, tallow-dips and lye-soap, and the passing of the old customs like “infares” and “beef-companies”. They talked about things to eat: how these had changed; how bacon had risen from low estate to its present high station, and how each succeeding year tenderloins were harder to get in town.

In short, they talked about the things which make up the bulk of the lives of all of us—the things which, although they are of infinite variety, are known to everyone, and so are as current in conversation, being media of exchange, as the coin of the realm is in commerce.

In this conversation they all took part save one—

a little old-fashioned lady who had duly taken her place in the circle, who had listened but had not spoken. Her hair was done in the old-fashioned way. Her dress was cut on the old-fashioned lines. Her attitude of quiet but absorbed attention was the old-fashioned attitude. For she did not miss a word that was spoken, or a movement of those guests. She had studied, without seeming to do so, everything about them, their look, their manner, their use of words, the inflection of their voices, their gestures, their knowledge of common things, their attitude towards little things, their unconscious betrayal of likes and dislikes in use of emphasis and the absence of it, their polite assents and sudden demurrers and all that men do and say and think, in running conversation, which write them down large for what they are, for those to read who have eyes and ears and mind to read.

The visit had been long, as entertaining visits are likely to be. The two distinguished guests arose, shook hands around the circle, said goodbye and passed together out the gate to the long dusty road.

As they were passing out the gate, the little old-fashioned lady spoke. She did not expect the visitors to overhear her, but they did.

She turned to the other members of the family and rendered her verdict, in simple affirmation. She said:

“They’re just folks; ain’t they?”



## THE FATHER OF A TOWN

Two motives urge me to this writing adventure. Both are fanciful. The first is a simple desire to record impressions of folks I have known. The second is an obligation I feel to him who will be the equivalent of the newspaper man in my town two hundred years hence. Some one in the writing game in that day is almost certain to wonder about the folks who started his town and inhabited it when it was young. I want to supply him with the testimony of an eye-witness.

I do not expect anyone to read all I shall set down. Indeed I feel I shall disappoint my friends into dropping the series early and likewise encourage those who do not like my manner to condemn my work at the very beginning. But I feel I may be read at random by a lot of people who are entirely indifferent to me, and are to be lured into attention to almost anything by an oversupply of leisure.

I am going to start with William Greiffenstein. I think I was first attracted to him by the fact that some one called him, in my hearing, the "father" of the town. I do not think the title meant anything to me at the time. But it distinguished him to me. When he walked forth in the afternoon among his children, he presented a unique figure. He would now. He was rather thick-set and distinctly German. He pronounced the town's name as the Indians pronounced it — subilantly—Ouishita. He wore habitually a white shirt, with a white collar, never a necktie, boots and black clothes—probably something akin to broadcloth. The hat was slouch and usually well down over his eyes. These eyes were weak and squinting, and I gathered somewhere that they had been made

so by smoke in Indian teepees. He walked rather flat-footed and carried a cane and smoked a pipe as he walked forth.

Douglas Avenue was his street. When he ceased to trade with the Indians, he built for his estimable Indian wife the biggest house in town, platted his farm, gave away lots, and pulled the town to him by this device. He made Douglas Avenue a business thoroughfare as part of this design. I don't think I can reproduce him without getting his children in the background. It is necessary to see a number of them too; some of them in groups and some as individuals. There was always the cluster of noisy cowboys around the gambling joints and the saloons—the high-heeled spurred species who were never as bad as the drama has made them. By these Greiffenstein was known, but not addressed, as “Dutch Bill”. He was treated with respect by them, as most citizens were. There were occasional, but not numerous, groups of blanketed Indians, the squaws usually squat on the sidewalks and the bucks loitering about in the lazy fashion of Indians in town. To these Greiffenstein was friend and counsellor. They camped in his front yard, ate his food and borrowed money of him and paid him in beaded presents of little value. They, like the cowboys, respected him. He dropped into the corner saloon and watched the gentlemen of the waxed moustaches, white shirt sleeves and diamond studs deal faro and whirl the roulette wheel. They respected him. He wandered down the avenue to the principal real estate office of the town—Steele & Levy. They handled most of his realty for him. Steele, they said, had been a prize-fighter in his youth. He was a giant. He had a bullet-hole through his right cheek—from the Civil war. He died in penury in Tacoma many years ago, big, big-hearted and big-brained Jim Steele. There were a

thousand old-time friends who would have helped him, had he asked. But he did not ask. Levy, an Alsatian, with white, finely veined hands, fastidious in his dress, gentle-spoken, gentle-bred, was carried away to Wall street by his sons, many years ago. But in those days when Greiffenstein swung like a heavy craft into their office and docked in a chair and filled the room with the smoke from his pipe, these men as the cowboys, the Indians, the gamblers, respected him.

I followed him one day to my father's office—the editor's office. My father, even in those pioneer days, wore a silk hat and dressed in fashion. He wrote his boom articles with a pencil and pasted the written sheets together. He read them to citizens who called, rolling the manuscript before him, like a classic scroll. When he had completed this particular article, he reached down under his desk where he kept a big bucket of fine cut tobacco, and took a chew. Greiffenstein loaded his pipe and filled the room with smoke. Greiffenstein complimented the article and my father was much pleased.

The two men went to the window and watched the pageantry of the avenue—the Indians, the cowboys, a noisy herd of long-horned Texas cattle, followed by wagons of wheat, followed by the town Cyprians, painted and feathered, in their afternoon parade in an open cab. The avenue was impossibly wide. It made the shacks which lined it seem smaller than they were in fact. Beyond the thoroughfare the town straggled away to the unbroken treeless prairie in little disordered groups of dwellings.

Even to me as a boy, the prospect looked desperate. For Greiffenstein and my father, and Steele and Levy, and the others, were of one great enthusiasm—this was the beginning of a city. The only knowledge of a city I had came from the drop curtain of the town

opera house, signatured Tchudy—how that name has remained with me! This showed a narrow street flanked with high brick buildings all in line and miraculously, uniformly erect. That, I believed, was the vision these men saw.

It was, indeed, their vision. I have come to know that they were a generation of builders. It was their religion to build. They exacted one fealty of everybody—faith in the vision. The greater the faith, the greater the builder. I have never met in the world since any enthusiasm for anything which showed this unanimity. It was bread and drink to every soul in that prairie town. As a boy I believed that this will to build was quite the usual thing. I have come to know that it was not normal.

For the town was unusual. So was William Greifenstein, its father. Somewhere along the line he dropped out. He went back among the Indians, who are not builders. He died poor. I think he still had, when he died, before his weak squinting eyes, the vision. I do not know.

## THE BEARDED GRAIN

You may not have thought of it, but a young town seems to have few old people in it. That was true of my town at least. There seemed to be no place for them. The few who were with us suffered a certain isolation. First, they appeared to be always in the way, and knew it. Second, the town having no common memory, there was little inducement for the old to band together and live their lives over in talk in the manner of old people. So they were not much in evidence.

Most notable of the aged I have known was Father Bliss. He was so addressed by everybody. I do not know where he came from. I do not know why he came. I was never able to determine how he lived.

But I knew where he lived. So did everybody. In truth Father Bliss' domicile was, in many respects, the most striking sight in town. It was a single room shack just off the main business thoroughfare in the center of the city. He did not own the lot on which it stood. He did not rent it. The lot belonged to the county and he merely occupied it. I do not know how he came by his shack. He probably built it himself with gift lumber.

Whether it was or was not his handicraft, it was wholly original. In the midst of a carpentry that was universally on right angles Father Bliss' shack was singularly constructed on curved lines. It simulated something from the sea—a cabin on a small craft. For the roof of it was curved and its windows suggested portholes.

Father Bliss was a small-boned man, slightly bent, with an abundance of fine white hair, usually disordered

and an equally abundant, fine white beard always kempt. He usually walked forth with a long stick which was something more than a cane and something less than a staff.

He was a philosopher. He worked at it. I do not think he really felt equal to anything else. I gathered from the town gossip that when he first came the citizens sought to set him at some useful task; of course, this is all a boy's impression and may not be wholly within the facts. In a pathetic sort of a way, it seemed to me, he entered into the public movement in his behalf. It was quite an undertaking to find something for him. He was not equipped for business, and so the community had to choose for him among the professions. He knew no law, so that was out of the question. Besides there were lawyers in town. He knew some medicine, it seems, but the community vetoed that proposition. Possibly he didn't know enough medicine to satisfy the citizens. Besides the town had doctors. Then somebody thought of dentistry. Anybody, said the voice of the people, could be a dentist. Moreover the town had no dentist.

Father Bliss consented. I think he was brow-beaten into consenting by the unanimity of the community. It was a wise community. It didn't patronize him. It recommended him.

A Texas cowboy, who arrived with a herd over the Chisholm trail with a molar that was throwing out jagged lightning, like the old advertisements of an electric belt, was directed to Father Bliss. He braced with whisky several times on his way to the ordeal. It has never been clear what happened. All that was ever recorded was that the cowboy, minus the molar, broke from the shack like a locoed steer, and with a wild cry for revenge, plunged into the nearest saloon, took three or four drinks and then began organizing

the cattle drivers for trouble. He was a discriminating cowboy. He recognized that Father Bliss was not a dentist—and didn't pretend to be. The mangled cowboy proposed no harm to Father Bliss. That would have been pitifully inadequate. His plan was to first shoot up the town and then burn it.

The authorities got him out of town in some way and Father Bliss went back to philosophy. Being a philosopher, he loved wisdom and hated folly. Most modern manifestations of progress he condemned as folly. First of all his soul revolted against humanity's insanity in waste.

I gathered from my conversations with him that this passion was not the passion of thrift. Possibly the community, thought it was that, but how the community could think that, when Father Bliss was always so poor, I could not see. He did not propose to save in order to accumulate. That process would have lurking in it the grinning demon—avarice—and Father Bliss was far too wise to have any compromise with avarice. He was against waste, as waste itself because waste is sinful, and not because saving is profitable.

I have seen him pick up old tin cans in the alleys, put them in a sack and toddle off with them, shaking his hoary locks and murmuring to himself as he went: "Waste! Waste! Waste!" I have seen him carry buffalo skulls from west of the Big Arkansas to his shack to save them. In those days there was a lively sale for buffalo bones, gathered from the prairies, but there was no sale for the skulls. But some skulls were brought to town and thrown away.

Father Bliss gathered these up and piled them on the roof of his shack. It was this jagged calcined crown of skulls which marked his domicile above all other places in town. The old tin cans, bottles and all

the flotsam of the frontier, he stowed away inside. He never troubled himself over the thought that there was no sale for this rubbish. It was simply his protest against the custom of the time. Before he died his accumulations had quite crowded him out.

One day I was talking with Father Bliss when "Baron" Nitorth passed. He was an Englishman, some said, of aristocratic lineage. He was very drunk. Some saloon gang had tied a huge hamper on his back and covered it over with bits of blue and red ribbon. As he staggered up the street, singing a maudlin song, and followed by a crowd of jeering boys, Father Bliss murmured: "Waste! Waste! Waste!"

Once he and I stood together while they placed a huge stone in the portal of the Turner Opera House, then in course of construction. It was quite the biggest stone in town. Father Bliss turned to me and shocked me with this prophecy: "In two thousand years that stone will be all that is left of Wichita!"

The stone and the building of which it was a part have long since disappeared. The philosophers are so often wrong.

Father Bliss was a Methodist. In the amen corner of that church the congregation provided him with a large over-stuffed easy chair. Every Sunday he nodded there, in his corner, whiter, weaker as the years went by, but still protesting, until at last he slipped away from us to the far frontiers of the infinite.



## A FLOWER THAT GREW BETWEEN

11210  
3  
A THOUSAND feet or so from our house lived, when I was a boy, a girl named Ilion Beard. She had black curly hair and laughing blue eyes. I remember her as pretty in face and winsome. She was six or seven years my senior. She was one of the first persons in the world, not of my family circle, who, I could definitely decide, liked me.

3  
Often Ilion and I would wander about the prairie together picking wild flowers. These were usually daisies—some white, some purple. They were never abundant, but grew best at the edges of the buffalo-wallows which after rains were tiny ponds, and in dry spells, shallow, sun-cracked saucers.

5  
Ilion and I would sit at the edge of one of these saucers, while Ilion taught me Longfellow's simple stanzas. It was through her that I first heard that there was a Reaper whose name is Death. The introduction did not mean much to me at the time. The scent of the prairie in my nostrils, the smiling sky in my eyes, the cloud shadows that pulsed across the plain, and the gentle murmur of the gentle girl, left the poet's image of a scythe only a fancy and nothing more.

112820  
I was very intimate with Ilion's folks. For a long time the affairs of Ilion's mother occupied me to the exclusion of all other concerns. In the first place, I picked up the fragments of a story which I tried to piece together. No one ever told me all of it, and I was afraid to ask. Out of the chance pieces I constructed an incident, probably not helped by a boy's invention. I never could vouch for it and cannot now. The way I pieced the fragments established Mrs.

Beard's husband as “Red” Beard. I made out vaguely that “Red” had drifted into Wichita and gone wild. Or he may have gone wild and drifted into Wichita. One night, as I pieced out the story, “Red” called at Rowdy Joe's dance hall—and Rowdy Joe had also gone wild—and the shooting began. The lights were plunked out, the dancers poured out of the windows in cascades, and in the end they carried “Red” from the place, dead. I gathered also that Rowdy Joe was arrested, jailed and escaped.

All that aside, I found Mrs. Beard in Wichita—my earliest recollection of a neighbor. She was a woman of refinement. She eked out an existence by sewing, quilting and making rag carpets and such things. At least I think so. I did not concern myself with this. My concern was another matter—and that was Mrs. Beard's impending riches.

I think she enjoyed talking to me about it. Perhaps other people offended her by showing impatience at a twice-old tale, or by revealing their incredulity. I was, on the contrary, a perfect glutton for the story, and completely credulous of every word of it.

And yet today I remember only the general outlines of it and my concern over it. I understood that Beardstown was a considerable city in Illinois. It was not a town like Wichita. It was a city, like that shown on the drop curtain in our opera house. I gathered that it was once the farm of “Red” Beard's grandfather, and that in some way the town had gotten it away from him and the family. But that there was a flaw in the title and that the courts—or some one—were about to step in and put the town off and put Mrs. Beard in possession of the farm. She told me herself that this would make her a very rich woman.

I gathered the impression that this was to take place very soon. It was the nearness of the event which

made trouble for me. I rejoiced with all my heart that Mrs. Beard was soon to come into great riches—not that I thought much of riches—but that it would bring her great contentment of mind. But immediately I was torn by a conflicting emotion—what would become of the city? Would Mrs. Beard order it removed from her farm? Or would she have it torn down? If she did, what about the people who lived there? Here in Wichita everybody was striving to build a city. There in Illinois they had one already built and yet it was in danger of being wiped out utterly. Secretly I became for the moment a champion of Beardstown. Guiltily I hoped that something would happen to save it. But I did not question Mrs. Beard on this score. A revelation of sympathy for the doomed city would have been rank treason to her—I knew that. And besides I soon swung back to Mrs. Beard's side in the matter, and shared her tremendous enthusiasm over the recovery of the farm. In this mad old world, how early we learn to be partisans.

I loitered around the Beard house a lot. I liked the Beard fare—it was frugal, but it was a change. I liked Mrs. Beard's confidence in me for my faith in her designs on Beardstown, Illinois.. I liked Ilion for the flattery of her esteem—which begins quite early, by the way, in the unsatisfied hunger of every boy for the approval of beautiful women.

So we gathered daisies and sat at the edge of buffalowallows and watched the cloud-shadows beat across the landscape. And slowly I mastered the poetic symbol that life is real and earnest and the grave is not the goal. I did not dispute this. Indeed I cannot remember when I was not at ease on immortality. I must have been born so. The sky, the stars, the sunlight, the unseen but tangible air, the birds, the butterflies, the daisies, all championed the perpetuity of

life to me and put death away as an ugly contradiction which was not true. I watched the butterflies—joyful in life today, gone tomorrow, but their death was in the grass, or among the rose-bushes or in the shadows of the willows. Their going did not obtrude. There was no challenge in their departure. The elements from which they came quickly gathered them home again. This, to me, was true of the dead birds I came across, and even of the cattle of the fields—where death faced the open sky and the sun and the kindly stars, and offered life directly back to them.

Perhaps I do not get my view to you. But I had then never known death. Tuberculosis had marked Ilion Beard. I did not know this. I was not told of it until the awful hour of foreclosure. When she was dying she sent for me. I was led into the room. Her cheeks were marble-white and sunken, her lustrous eyes strangely large and staring. She saw my boyish terror, and lifted, ever so slowly, a wasted hand from the coverlet, and into her great eyes for an instant came the ghost of her old smile. As I took the hand the terror passed and I floated out on a sudden flood of gratitude—gratitude to her that she, seeing my terror, had understood.

## A CERTAIN FRONTIERSMAN

IN this world, usually I am as devoted to romance as the next, but there are times when I find myself a hotly rebellious adherent of realism. I am for realism whenever I think back on William Matthewson.

Matthewson refused to present himself to the world dramatically.

In a day when the purveyors of drama were hungry for high color and in a generation crowded with individuals who were eager to supply it, Matthewson, who had the high color and could have shown it, wouldn't.

In this I think he must have been the typical frontiersman. Nothing that I or anybody else may set down, here or hereafter, will prove him the typical frontiersman. The world has other ideas and will retain them and authenticate them to succeeding generations.

Thirty years ago Matthewson was no longer a frontiersman. The frontier had passed and the farm had come, and Matthewson had become a farmer. He was now beyond middle life. He was very tall, very spare, with large, powerful hands and a stern face, a large nose, Roman, and the steadiest eyes I have ever seen in a human's head.

Occasionally he would drive in, hitch his horse, and stalk into Ben Aldrich's drug store, where he loafed. I loafed there also when a boy, and Matthewson and I were often alone together, our feet on the stove-fender.

I developed the interviewing habit early. I was always on a hunt for personal experiences. I learned early to proceed cautiously with Matthewson. He was reticent by nature and not susceptible to the usual run

of questions which encourage reminiscence. It was necessary to sit in silence and leave the initiative to him, in order to get results. That didn't always bring results, for often he would rise to his feet and stalk forth without a word. The newspapers had a lot about him, first and last, but they never published direct quotations from him. The reporters couldn't get them and there was something about Matthewson that discouraged invented interviews. But everybody knew some of the salient points in his career. His log house was one of the first houses in town—it was still standing in my youth. Before he came to Wichita he had lived among the Indians in West Central Kansas. He had there quite an establishment, apparently, with a lot of hands. Among his hands, legend had it, was a wagoner named William F. Cody. During a famine, or drouth, or both, Matthewson had organized a relief for the stricken settlers which included some sort of distribution of buffalo meat or, possibly, distribution of ammunition which was followed by buffalo meat. So he became known as "Buffalo Bill."

Nobody in Wichita called him Bill or Bill Matthewson. He was Mr. Matthewson here. He was a quiet, public-spirited citizen, a regular attendant at his lodge, a staunch partisan and a faithful voter at primary and election. With all the others, he subscribed to the vision of a future city.

One day I contrived to get him into his early life. I don't know how I did it. But I did. We had been sitting in silence, with our feet on the drug store stove, when we were joined by Mike Block, who was a California forty-niner. He was the silent kind, also. It must have been a re-action of Block's silence on Matthewson's silence, for when I dropped my question into the situation Matthewson opened up. His ability at narration was superior. His sentences were short and

direct. He would have taken well stenographically. This was his story. Fifteen years or so before the Civil War he was a seventeen-year-old boy in Northern New York. A brutal step-father, drunk, struck Matthewson's mother. When Matthewson returned home, the step-father was in a stupor on the bed. Matthewson pounced upon him, bound him to the bed with thongs, took a bull-whip and beat him until he cried for mercy. Then Matthewson put some meat and bread in a sack, took his gun and his dog and set out afoot for the West. He eventually wound up in a lumber camp in Michigan. After a season there, he took his gun and his dog and again started West. I gathered that this was about 1847. He walked across Illinois, Iowa, Kansas and landed in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Incidentally he added a curious item. He had never been without the "sense of north". Day or night, forest or plain, town or country, he had never been "turned around". He was born with a compass in his brain.

When he had proceeded this far I saw that he believed that he had talked entirely too long. But I was afraid to put in a question to encourage him to go on, for fear I might stop him. This unwonted show of loquacity, however, had provoked the reticent Mike Block to speech, for thus goaded to sudden garrulity, he asked Matthewson what he thought of Indians.

Matthewson said in reply that Indians when bad, had been made bad by white men. He was just that brief.

Then he stopped. Block joined him in his silence. In a vague way I knew that Matthewson had had some dramatic contests with white men and with Indians. I knew I wouldn't get them, but I asked for them.

Matthewson did not answer my question. He arose and stalked out.

As a boy I gathered then that it was not possible for a typical frontiersman to present himself to the world dramatically. The impression endures.

Many years after this conversation, William Cody, Matthewson's former employee, came to Wichita. He had been pretty much over this earth. He had dramatized his long hair, his fringed clothes and his sombrero, until to kings, queens, and populace the world over, the wild west was as full of colorful romance as the age of knight-errantry is to us. "Buffalo Bill" pitched his great tents with his Indians and cowboys and brass bands and red-lemonade stands in Wichita, in Matthewson's pasture. And Cody, the new Buffalo Bill, went to see Matthewson the old Buffalo Bill that morning. I think Cody understood Matthewson. I am sure that Matthewson understood Cody.

The town legend has it that Cody gave Matthewson a lot of tickets and urged him to come to the show, but that afternoon when the big tent rang with the music of the mimic war dance and war cry, the blare of circus brass and crash of circus cymbal, Matthewson, in sight of it all, found that one of his fences needed mending and was too busy to go.



## THE ARTIST

I NEVER saw Nereus Baldwin at a public meeting. I never saw him in a theatre. I do not believe he ever rode in a street car. I never heard him mention politics. He never talked money. And he was the one man in the town who did not devote a portion of his day to dreaming about the growth of the place.

I saw a deal of him, much more than the rest of the community. He attracted me. I bored him. He didn't know that I knew I bored him. But I knew it just the same. One of the reasons that I bored him was that I wanted him to acknowledge my understanding of him, and often forced conversation on him when he wanted to be let alone, but was too considerate to dismiss me.

He was the town photographer. He was of Quaker origin. He located first at Park City and when that town reverted to prairie and evolved into the corn-field, which it is still, being one with Nineveh and Tyre, he moved to Wichita. He was a tall, spare man, always to me very handsome, fair of skin, with fine hair, a little longish, delicate hands and a most fetching tilt to his head when he was at work. You would have known him for an artist if you had met him, as well in Timbuctoo, as in the Latin Quarter.

In those days a photographer's place was known as a "gallery". The gallery consisted of a parlor-like front room, a dressing room off this, outfitted with a mirror, a comb and brush and a wash-stand. Back of this was an operating room, with a dark room adjoining. A couple of plush chairs, several iron head-rests, the camera and a movable background made up the equipment. The patron of the early day usually

walked into the parlor with the vague feeling that he had invaded a private apartment and might better retreat. Being prevented, however, by a reassurance that he was on the right track, he was induced to declare his needs in the photographic line. This accomplished, he was maneuvered into the dressing-room. Inasmuch as he had been thoroughly groomed at home, this was really superfluous. But also inasmuch as something was expected of him, he ordinarily proceeded to wet his hair and to brush it down to a marvelous flatness, and to rearrange his coat. I have watched hundreds of men at this stage of the business. Without exception those who had their coats buttoned, unbuttoned them and those who had their coats unbuttoned, buttoned them up. Then the patron waited. Just why the room with the camera should enjoy a certain sanctity, I have never divined. But it did. No one ever voluntarily invaded it. Invited in, the patron ranged himself by a chair, usually with an early nervous demand to know what he was to look at. The iron head-rest was jiggered up and down, and eventually clamped with a cold finality against the back of the patron's head. He was by this time in a state of both mental and facial rigidity that was tragic to behold.

Nereus Baldwin had one of the softest voices I have known. He used it now to induce relaxation in the patron. A suggestion, a touch, a movement across the room, by the artist, and the subject began to melt back from the dread country of graven images. A movement under the black camera cover, the removal of the brass cap, its replacement and the deed was done.

The artist disappeared in the dark-room and presently reappeared with a misty glass plate which he held over the black camera cover. The patron gazed upon his counterfeit with a disheartening conviction

that the camera had discovered in him a hitherto unsuspected but undoubted attack of virulent smallpox.

"Of course," Nereus Baldwin always said in his gentle voice, "it will be retouched."

Now when I speak of Nereus Baldwin at work, I mean when he was retouching negatives. He was usually alone, in a strong light, with a heap of finely pointed pencils in front of him. There he worked in silence, except occasionally for the folks over in Schnitzler's saloon across the alley who were given to breaking into song in the late afternoon. With his head to one side, a pause, the glance of a critical eye, a line here, a point there, a gray shadow and a high light, Nereus Baldwin worked on in a great, complacent isolation, making humanity over.

It was on such occasions that I practiced my invasions on his privacy. He endured me. That was not what I wanted however. I wanted him to credit me with understanding him, and I always felt that he wouldn't do this because I was a boy. I may be wrong about this. Possibly he didn't want anybody, understanding or not, to bother him.

I insisted on philosophizing to him on this matter of retouching. Why didn't people want the truth? Well, the answer was, he said, that the truth wasn't the truth. Art was the truth. Art was not the truth of fact. Art was the truth of impression. True knowledge is not knowing things as they are, but knowing things as they seem to be.

The moving vision of the men and women of my youth was the ambitious dream of a coming city, which they were to build. It was a material design which filled their lives and directed their thoughts and actions.

Here was a man who was among them, known to all of them, but surely not of them. His vision was not

theirs. I do not think he ever lost a wink of sleep over the railroad bonds the people might not vote, and so condemn us to obscurity, or the bonus to the packing house we might not give and so let Wellington or Winfield leave us in the lurch.

But out home he had a microscope and a telescope, the only microscope and the only telescope in town. His leisure was given over to a study of the wonderful world beneath us and the wonderful world above us, which is shuttered up against the naked eye. He lived not far from the center of the town. There you would find him of a pleasant evening, usually alone. From the town came the clank of cowboy spurs in tireless tattoo on the wooden sidewalks, the glad cry of "keno", welcoming sudden fortune, in the gambling room, the grievous whine of a mechanical piano in Emil Werner's saloon, and all the raucous night sounds of a frontier town, and at the tapered end of the telescope was Nereus Baldwin, oblivious to it all, indifferent to it all, detached, raking the star-strewn sky to intrigue his soul into communion with a distant sun.

## THE SCHOOL TEACHER

I NEVER saw Mr. Fraker. Yet there has been in my life no one who has made a more profound impression on me than Mr. Fraker. It came about through Mrs. Fraker. I never succeeded in getting the exact facts in the Fraker matter. The whole population seemed to be in a conspiracy not to let us children know about it. In after years I have come to believe that there was no such conspiracy, but that silence about the case, which was observed by the community, resulted from a tremendous sympathy following an exercise of condemnation.

I do not now attempt to put down the story in detail, because I do not know it. What I picked up was that Mr. Fraker was the town's leading banker, and something went wrong with the bank, and that one night he ran away. He had lived in one of the big houses in the town, further distinguished by the fact that it was brick and nearly all homes were frame. It was said that he had gone to Mexico. There were no railroads to the southwest in those days, so the story of his escape involved, to my imagination, an overland flight of a thousand miles. I have a hazy recollection that he was overtaken, brought back and convicted. I don't know this for a fact, and it is not material here. I do know that I never saw him and that when he entered my life he was no longer in Wichita.

It started over his house. It stood in a big lot by itself. When we children passed it on our way to school we all felt a terrible depression about it. For we understood that while Mrs. Fraker and the children still lived there, it was mortgaged or involved in some other way in the inexorable law, and that it was only

a question of time when she and the children would be set out on the prairie—homeless. It was noteworthy that some of the children who shivered over this prospect themselves lived in two-room shacks or in clap-board shanties.

The lines of social stratification had not set in in those days to any extent. There were families who lived in shanties, shacks, four-room cottages and homes which later were designated in the social news as “palatial”, as few as seven rooms entitling a house to this distinction. But the school room was a melting pot into which the younger population was poured daily and from which it was drawn at the end of the term as a pretty fair democracy and with considerable powers of resistance to the social classification already forming among the adults.

The most vital manifestations of brotherhood in this world I have seen I observed as a boy in the school room. It may not be true today, but in my boyhood a teacher was put under instant surveillance by the pupils in the matter of “favorites”. Impartiality was exacted of her. She could not be a respecter of persons and enjoy the favor of the room. If she chanced to show a preference, rebellion was at once manifested towards her and wrath visited upon the pupil she favored. I remember, in this connection, the show of sympathy for those in distress by a school of children as among the most moving things of my life. There was, too, a fine sense of the proprieties among children which impressed me then and impresses me still. Little Agnes Tudor, who lost her mother, came creeping back to school to meet a tender consideration which ranged from the softened voice of the teacher to an apple left surreptitiously on her desk at recess. The Wilton boys, whose father was very, very poor, brought their lunch to school and ate it over in a corner by

themselves, so that the others might not see how scant it was. I never knew a boy or girl to invade that corner at the noon hour, but scores of times I have seen children get part of their own lunch to those boys by every device, except that of actually giving it to them.

Lucy Laytie was a little girl whose folks drifted into town in those days. The Layties came in the summer without anything and lived in a tent and a wagon. By winter time the tent was pretty well boarded over and banked up with dirt, and the Layties managed to struggle through with sunflower and corn-cob fuel. A year later they had a two-room shack and were on the way to fortune.

Lucy Laytie's clothes during this period were pitiable, and that was not an era of sartorial excess on the part of anybody. She always looked ill-clad and her attempt at neatness seemed to emphasize her poverty rather than to conceal it. One day in her second spring she came to school arrayed in a new pink calico dress. It brightened the whole room. During the opening song she upset a bottle of ink on the dress. I think the whole class screamed. Lucy Laytie hysterically grasped her dress, then dropped her face in her hand and wept bitterly. This resulted in dabbing her face over with ink. She must have been a ludicrous sight. But no one there laughed. Up to this time I had believed in fairies. I prayed that a fairy would appear and touch the dress with a wand and make it new. No fairy appeared. It was the last opportunity for fairies to prove themselves to me, and I thereafter dismissed them as myths.

One opening day in our room we found our new teacher to be Mrs. Fraker. She was a little woman with a sweet face and a most gentle, motherly manner. I picked up somewhere that she was "brave", which I

did not understand. For the moment I think all of us children were greatly relieved. She had not been set out on the prairie, homeless, as we all had feared. The school board had given her a chance to earn money by teaching us. It really made school to us seem worth while.

She was very patient—was Mrs. Fraker. She struggled with the contrary little hands which could not write in a straight line, and the contrary little tongues that could not twist themselves around long words, and the contrary little brains that could not distinguish clauses from sentences.

This must have lasted a month or two, during which we all grew to love the little woman. The heat of September melted into the mild Indian summer of October and that into the frosty skies of November.

One afternoon as the day wore on and the golden light faded, Mrs. Fraker sat at her desk looking out the window across the tawny prairie. Suddenly she gave a little scream and buried her head in her arms and sobbed like a child. The principal came in and dismissed us. That is the last I ever saw of Mrs. Fraker. I think she left town with the children.

All my life I have carried the memory of that little scream with me. All my life I have hoped that she found Mr. Fraker and that they were very, very happy till the end of their days.



## THE BOOMER

IT WAS not for me to suspect that the very tall man who stood in a group at the corner Saturday afternoons was to compel history to take his name, record it and pass it on to posterity. Nor did the community foresee any such thing. I now believe that the very tall man himself knew that he was going to make history do that very thing. My interest in the very tall man—he was in fact six feet four in his stocking feet—arose from a story, vivid enough to excite any boy. This story, and I have not the slightest idea as to its authenticity, was to the effect that during a contest between my father and the very tall man for a legislative office, the very tall man made a statement which Big Jim Steele, a partisan of my father, resented. The disputants agreed to fight it out. With a crowd they repaired to an island in the Big Arkansas river and did fight it out with bare knuckles, Steele winning.

The very tall man was David L. Payne. He was not vocal, as you imagine a crusader should be. In the corner group Saturday afternoons he was usually silent. The others were agitating. Payne struck me as gloomy, and, I may have put it down then, as dull. He was not only long, he was very lank and raw-boned. He was booted. He had a moustache of a military order and a goatee.

Occasionally I heard that Payne had been arrested and dragged—that was the word—at the end-gate of his wagon for hundreds of miles, and thrown into prison in a distant town. Then in a completely mysterious way, here would come Payne again to the corner Saturday afternoon, as gloomy, as silent, as ever—with the little crowd around him.

To me his physical presence so close upon his imprisonment was a distracting contradiction. I sought to have it explained. How did he get out of prison? About the only explanation I obtained was a vague assertion that the United States was afraid to keep him in prison.

Why was the United States afraid of this very tall man? No one was very clear in answering me. In legal complications no one is very clear to a boy, because, I have since learned, they are not very clear themselves.

History records that Payne was "dragged" eight times. Personally I did not keep the count. What I knew was that one day I would hear of his dread plight and the next day, here he would be on the corner in Wichita, gloomy, silent, but unquestionably here.

As time went on I picked up the missing chapters in the story. Some of the chapters were thirty years in coming to me. Payne came to Kansas long before the Civil War. He went into the Civil War. He carried his comrade, Cy Leland, who was wounded, from the field of battle. After the war he went on an Indian campaign. Afterward he was given to showing up at Topeka at the legislature and having himself elected assistant sergeant-at-arms and the like. At the beginning of Wichita he came here, lived on a "ranch" in Payne township, which still bears his name, and ran for office.

One day Cy Leland found Payne in Washington, ragged and hungry. Payne had gone to Washington to land a job and had failed. His politics were wrong and Leland told Payne to change them; Jim Legate, another Kansan of renown, gave Payne an old suit of clothes, and with a change of clothes and politics they landed Payne as an assistant door-keeper in the House of Representatives. Cy Leland told me this part of the story. He was not given to romance.

In the sedentary and contemplative job of door-keeper Payne picked up the fact that Oklahoma, a vast domain, south of Wichita, in the center of the Indian country, was public, not Indian land, and therefore legally subject to settlement. Thereupon Payne determined to settle it. The Seminole Indians had ceded the land to the United States. Payne found it out, and planted the seed from which has grown the rich commonwealth, Oklahoma.

The man who could germinate a state could exact things of history. Payne knew this and set to work. Beneath the whole endeavor there was undoubtedly a desire to give lands to the landless and to bring idle fields into the fructifying hands of humanity. But I am persuaded that this desire was an incident, after all. In one of his numerous legal contests with the government, Payne recited that his desire to make his home in this virgin land was first, for his health; second, for the pursuit of agriculture, and third, "for his pleasure to hunt in its woods, to fish and bathe in its streams and trap in its waters, to enjoy its scenery and climate".

In his campaign Payne ran flat up against the cattlemen and the railroads. The cattlemen had favorable leases in the domain and the railroads land grants. As Payne's campaign grew, these factors both went on record to the effect that Oklahoma was not fit for agricultural purposes. In rebuttal, Payne dwelt on the beauty of the scenery. He did not dream of petroleum.

Given scant respect for his ideas in Congress, Payne came home and prepared to take physical possession of the coveted land. He organized Oklahoma colonies. These were assembled near the state line and thence in a long straggling caravan of covered wagons and horsemen, wound down to Oklahoma. "Doc" Worrell,

an early Wichitan, who was not a doctor at all, who went along for adventure, gave me the best accounts of these crusades in after years. Under the orders from the general commanding at Fort Leavenworth, the soldiers surrounded the boomers and ordered them out of the territory. Payne, the boomer of boomers, asserted his full legal rights to possession on the public domain. The army officer parleyed, possibly he threatened, at least the boomers claimed he did, Payne remained obdurate. He would not move out voluntarily. He and his lieutenants were arrested. Under what law they demanded—under military law, the officer responded. This was not a military reservation they said. But his authority was military, the officer contended. Then he arrested Payne and Payne's lieutenants and conducted them to Ft. Smith, Arkansas. He may have "dragged" them. They said he did. There was no law to hold Payne, of course, and he was released. Then he came home and organized another raid, which was a much more dramatic thing in the Eastern newspaper than it was out here. The raids compelled Congress eventually to open Oklahoma. Four or five years before Oklahoma was opened, one day at the breakfast table, the very tall man crumpled in his chair—dead.

He was not to know his achievement. History records this as a tragedy. I have never believed it so. History is not a record of facts. It is a record of impressions of facts. Payne did not see the achievement. But he heard the footsteps of the oncoming millions following him, and hearing, died, content.

## THE LAWYER

MY MEMORY begins with my fifth year and on the Fourth of July. This was centennial day—1876. My grandfather had limited my allowance of fire-crackers to a single bunch. I was in rebellion and had set out across the prairie for home crying. My curiosity overcame my grief in this fashion. In the bright sunlight I detected long filaments streaming away from my eyes in whichever direction I looked. This natural phenomenon had arrested me, and I was examining it scientifically, when I discovered an assembly of citizens some distance away. I forgot my grievance and the filaments aforesaid, and made my way into the crowd and through it. Two or three men were laying a corner stone. It was a church crowd. There was prayer and song. After that my memory winked out for a period of nine months. This lack of continuity in the memory of children, I suppose, is the usual thing. Oddly my memory awoke again in connection with another assembly of citizens.

The big Arkansas river was on a tear. The melting mountain snows filled its shallow banks with a rushing, boiling flood, harmless enough in itself. But heavy rains in Central Kansas had given the little Arkansas river all it could hold. The flood in the larger river dammed back the waters in the smaller river and turned them out on the town. There was tremendous excitement, of course. The fire-bell was sounded. Citizens rushed to the little river and threw up embankments. But these were overborne by the flood and the people were soon moving into second stories and shouting across strange spaces of water to their neighbors. A

miraculous number of boats appeared, and quite a number of men fished on the main streets. The usual joking signs appeared in short order. I suppose there was considerable loss in damaged property. This is a view of my later years, however. It struck me then and the impression lingers, that the town luxuriated in its excitement: that while the citizens were throwing up the embankments in mortal fear that they would not hold, they were at the same time hoping that they would give way. A boy gathers odd impressions. In the same way I used to fancy that the faces of a crowd at a town fire usually showed a strange satisfaction.

The flood was a few hours old when a crowd of citizens appeared near our house. I joined it at once. All eyes in that crowd were turned to one man—he was a trim slightly-built man, young, athletic, with deep furrows down either cheek which seemed to be journeying to meet under his chin. This was W. E. Stanley. I was to come to know him well. This, however, was the first time I had seen him, and the impression I gained then remained with me for many years. His talent was persuasion. He was a “power in front of a jury.” In several early criminal trials his conduct of his side of the case, whether for the state or the defense, was so notable that his fame spread through the southwest. He loved the art of persuasion. During the early-day political canvasses he held forth in the district school houses and spent the rest of the night getting back to town. He made the most notable speeches in the county conventions and in the town meetings for whatever purpose he was usually “down for a speech.” On Sundays he presided over a big Sunday School class, and showed there not only the power of persuasion but of exhortation. He was simple and Socratic in his dissertations to the

children. His illustrations were drawn from the everyday environment of his auditors.

For instance, he pointed to a tree across from the church which had been badly scarred by a runaway team. He told us that no matter how old the tree grew to be the scar would always show. The lesson was impressive. For several year after I kept that soft maple tree under surveillance, and was pained to see that slowly the scar not only healed over, but eventually disappeared.

Many years after, when he had become governor of the state, I told him this story about the tree and dwelt upon the absolute fallacy of rhetorical parables in general. I noticed that he did not relish the incident and I wondered a lot about his attitude.

Perhaps the talent of rhetorical persuasion is always impatient with the contradictions which would stem the full flood of convincing proof. Some times I have believed that oratory, in its power to sway the multitude into a single impulse, rests chiefly in this formula—of persuading the crowd to follow a single idea and to foreswear for the moment the innumerable refutations of that idea which every unit in the crowd would normally oppose to the idea. The favorite forensic device, which I have heard hundreds use, of stating an opponent's position, in opening, and then demolishing it in closing, is probably a recognition of this essential element in effectual oratory.

W. E. Stanley loved to make a public address when he could warm his audience. He was unusually gifted in warning them. Of course, he had his sentimental disappointments. After he had been elected governor he was invited to visit his boyhood home, Kenton, Ohio. He spoke. The crowd was unresponsive, he afterward told me, and he was quite hurt over it.

Perhaps that was temperamental. During the days

of his major political activities in Kansas, more than any man I have known in public life, he revelled in the delivery of those speeches which are part of the duties of a state's executive. And to the end, persuasion remained a passion with him.

All this I learned subsequent to the flood-encircled assembly near my home that day in Wichita. In that crowd that day, Stanley was the leader. Wichita's single railroad was built on a dirt-bed a little above the flat prairie. The bed seemed to be holding the flood waters on the town to an extent, for if the road-bed had not been there the flood waters, it was argued, must run on eastward into Chisholm creek. But the farmers from the east of the railroad were on the ground to protest against letting the flood through upon them. They were angry at the proposal. The town people were equally belligerent. Stanley outlined the law, easily, persuasively. The crowd of town-people, armed with spades, edged towards the railroad. The farmers grumbled. Stanley stopped speaking and jammed his spade down between two ties, the others followed, and the opening ditch was made. I am not sure whether this outlet either relieved the town or flooded the protected farms to any extent. My recollection is that on account of the lay of the land it did neither.



## THE LADY

IN a small town there is no privacy against a small boy. First and last, I had, in the households of Wichita at one time, the thoroughness of a census enumerator. This intimacy included a knowledge of people's kitchens—what they ate, what they read, what they affected in furniture as well as the stage of their culture as revealed by the discarded stuff in their garrets.

The vehicle of my invasion into these usually sacred precincts was always another boy, of course. The family which could show daughters only was safe. A son was an unfailing open sesame to the darkest closet.

I was splendidly impartial about my inquiries. The big house and the shack were as one to me. The fragrance of a meal in preparation wiped out all faculty for class-distinction. At the same time I became keenly analytical of racial and sectional differences in diet. I am under lasting obligations to the Schnitzlers, the Bissantz, the Tusches and others of that group for a preference for German food that has endured through life. To this day I can not think of Mrs. Aley without thankfulness to her for white unsalted butter, which we did not have at home. To the "Yankee" Millers, who were not Yankee at all, but from the south, I owe my fast affection for crackling corn-pone. There is a white meat sauce you can get in Paris today, to which I was introduced forty years ago in Wichita in the Cuenod home. Let me say that I feel quite lumpy in my throat as I write this, for I realize that there are not half a dozen left to whom the name of this French family means anything now.

To get back in the road—a boy once having invaded the precincts of another's home, becomes pos-

sessed of a fund of interesting and intimate facts about folks. He is apt to find, for instance, that the stern tyrant of the store downtown is the cringing subject of a wife at home. He is likely to note that his chum's big sister has one voice for the family, and quite another for the visitor in the parlor. And so on.

All this I duly noted. In time my travels brought me to the Woodman home. "Commodore" Woodman was a banker. He was a handsome man, with a very white beard, given to immaculate linen and fine clothes. I know of no reason for the naval title, except that he lived on the banks of the Little Arkansas river and owned a row-boat. The Woodmans occupied the old Munger house. This was one of the original domiciles in Wichita. It was built of logs. I do not want to be held to accuracy in this, but I think it was once an hotel. When the Woodmans occupied it, the logs were boarded over, the windows were long French ones, shaded with vines and rose bushes, and from its colonial portals the wide greensward sloped to the placid river. The Woodmans were all interesting—sons and daughters. The household had a library with current magazines in a reading room. The furniture was uniform and of a style, and the few pictures on the walls evidenced the quality of having been selected rather than to have been accumulated.

I studied the Woodman home a lot. Woodman was a banker, which carried to me the suggestion of lavish expenditure. But the Woodman home was not "rich". Nothing in it was to be remarked over anything else in it. Yet all of it together made me carry away the impression that it was remarkable. In after years I have come to know this factor in great plays and great books. I have come to know also, that this thing I am writing about is not natural. It doesn't just happen. It is the result of effort. Also I have come

to know that back of the effort is a powerful force—convention—and that back of convention is gentility.

But certainly none of these things I suspected then. I merely noted that the Woodman home was remarkable. I believed then that Mrs. Woodman was responsible for this—as indeed she was.

Mrs. Woodman and her kind have remained to me throughout life the most interesting study life has to offer. I mean gentlewomen. Whether you find them in play or book or in flesh and blood, they carry about them the aura before which all mankind instinctively uncovers. Cordelia has it in the play, Dorrit has it in the book. Marie Antoinette had it before Foquier-Tinville in the flesh. I have known villains to feel unstripped and ashamed before it. I have seen drunken brawls slink back into silence while it passed.

I do not remember when it has not fascinated me. I have examined it on its mental side, on its physical side, and have come to know, I think, that it is only subordinately mental and physical. For brilliancy in the feminine mind with its flashes of vaticination does not constitute gentility. Neither do the long, firm, sweeping lines, the warmth of color, and the lights that play in a woman's hair and in her eyes—which men call beauty—counterfeit it successfully. It is something else—something I never could fully identify—possibly an offering of the soul, and so, like faith, not subject to analysis.

Mrs. Woodman was a slender woman, tall, with gentle eyes, a clear complexion, and delicately veined hands. She moved always with grace. I do not know, of course, but I think she must have abhorred haste as she did sloth. She spoke with a soft voice, and to this day with my mature knowledge of the range of passion in every human soul, I can not imagine that she ever violated its modulation—even in the stress

of excitement. It seemed to me, the boyish invader of her kitchen, that she banned noise for the outlaw it is. While noise is dear to boys, her presence having banished it, more than made up for its loss.

So, having come to know Mrs. Woodman, I grew to wonder why when I could remark no one thing over another in her, she was altogether so wonderful to me.

From my point of earliest observation I had had but one hate. That was a hatred—it was indeed an obsession—against affectation. I particularly boiled inwardly against the affectation of fine manners. It was a habit of mine to subject nearly everyone I met to a searching scrutiny in this respect. I suppose I must have subjected Mrs. Woodman to this test. It is quite likely I did. If I did I acquitted her. For I saw her face joy and sorrow equally with calm eyes. And through the years I had opportunity to know that she sought to counterfeit no other's estate because she was so certain of her own—and without pride.

Long, long ago, the members of the Woodman family scattered. A change came in their fortune, as changes do come. I met Mrs. Woodman in after years in an eastern city and I would have told her then of my profound esteem for her. She sat in a darkened room, in a chair to which age had sentenced her—calm-eyed, soft-voiced, gentle—as she was forty years before. But I did not tell her.

## THE ACTOR

THERE was a world of nonsense about pioneer nicknames. They were sometimes aptly descriptive, more often they were not. I have never believed, for instance, that the inventor of "Tiger Bill" for W. P. Campbell was entitled to any particular credit for the invention. The man who first dubbed the long-legged cattleman, Pierce, "Shanghai," and made the name stick, had imagination. So did the pioneer who knighted the early spectacled auctioneer as "Four Eyes." But Farmer Doolittle's beginnings aside, there was no warrant for the adoption of the designation which all but obliterated his real name—George Litzenberg—for Farmer Doolittle was most industrious and was only a farmer for a very short period. The indiscriminate use of "Doc" as a title to many early Wichitans who were not doctors in any sense illustrates the community ineptitude in this respect.

My feeling about the inappropriate ornamentation given W. P. Campbell probably arises from the circumstance that I have always thought of him as a Thespian. The nick-name "Tiger Bill" was bestowed upon him when he was an early district judge, following some show of aggressive authority. It was revived a quarter of a century later when, as the state's law-officer, he essayed a courageous enforcement of the liquor statutes.

Notwithstanding, he was never "Tiger Bill" to me. As I have just said, he seemed always to belong properly to the theatre. I am confident that had his youth been cast in the theatre section of a great city he would have landed for life behind the foot-lights.

This fancy was founded originally on the fact that

I first saw him on the stage in the “Union Spy,” presented by local talent. I was devoted to the theatre. Wichita didn’t get much in the way of shows. The town was too small to attract strongly the modern strollers who go about on transcontinental trains, and besides, it was long in an inaccessible pocket between the East and the West; and more or less negligible in theatrical schedules. Only special guaranties would draw to the town the more notable artists in those days. Some were so brought. I saw them all. I was present that notable night when Janauschek ordered the curtain down in the sleep-walking scene of Macbeth because a cowboy in the audience noted audibly that “she had her shimmy on.” Sometimes actors whose fortunes had waned came to town, drawn to the smaller places in the desperate hope of a few chance dollars. One night, with my mother, I saw Sheridan play Louis XI to less than a hundred. It was a wild winter night, with a blizzard clawing at every window, and scratching at the door, but this man gave as splendid an interpretation, before his little shivering audience, as I have ever seen, I don’t believe the town knew who he was. I did not. But I left the theatre with the knowledge that I had seen one of the great actors of my time, confirmed many years afterward when I grew to know the people of the stage.

Deprived of outside offerings, Wichita from the earliest days provided entertainments of its own. Some of the lighter operas were given. A spectacle, “Belshazzar,” with Hiram Lewis in the title role, and gorgeous in tinselled velvet, sinking in terror before the blazing stencil on the back-drop, among a bevy of the town’s fairest women in their best Babylonian air, was the sensation of a week.

In due time “Union Spy” was given. It was “put on.” That is to say, a man with a perfectly poised

commercial instinct and only an incidental interest in the development of latent histrionic genius, struck town, and noted the large and flourishing proportion of veterans of the Civil War. After identifying the dramatically inclined among them, he proposed that they "put on" the "Union Spy." There followed meetings at Mrs. Milton Stewart's home and the careful business of selecting those who would "do" and those who would not—a delicate matter to carry off without offense. Ensued much studying of lines. Jesse Ask, furniture man, red-bearded and slim as a beanpole, down for six words in the play, walked the streets in mid-day memorizing, a spectre of weird abstraction. Came a night when they all tried the thing on the big bare stage, looking, walking and speaking in a tragic formula which prescribed that what was most unnatural must of necessity mirror the very image of Nature herself. Followed a certain evening, "the night before," when the dress rehearsal was put through with a smoothness that everybody knew the crowd could not duplicate at the first performance.

There was no anxiety about an audience. The house had been sold out for weeks before. There had been a great scramble for seats. In those days in the smallest theatres, there was a rigid classification into parquet and dress-circle. The dividing line between them was always more or less misty and was most tangible in the price differential between the two. The very old and the deaf were seated in the front rows. Fritz Schnitzler had always an aisle seat—he was very large. Dr. Fabrique, long the most faithful of the theater's devotees, was likewise provided with a point of vantage. Ben Aldrich, who never missed, was taken care of, and all the veterans and their wives were there—and what a wonderful generation they were.

How the plot of the play, dramatizing the story of their own joys and sorrows, trumpeting the mighty music of a nation's passion, not yet grown cold, stirred the blood of them.

How, after the little bell had jingled and the curtain rolled up, and Hattie Obrist had given her first lines with a Delphic detachment (I remember them yet: "I must to the St. Clair's and warn them at once of their danger") all the stiffness went out of the scenes, and all the crudities of gait and voice and posture melted before the blazing warmth of that audience's ardent sympathy.

I remember almost all the play. But I remember best "Tiger Bill" in the prison scene. He was a clean-shaven, well-knit, finely fibred figure, every inch a soldier. In the midst of his starving comrades, struggling for the bread that was thrown to them from the battlements, he gave his lines clearly, vibrant with emotion, surcharged with the import of the sentiment he portrayed. He was, to me then, every inch an actor. I have not changed my mind.

It is true that in the self-same prison scene, there descended from heaven an angel over the sleeping soldiers who might have broken the spell. The angel was Patti Strong. She was suspended by two wires from above. One of the wires broke and gave the angel a dangerous list to starboard. But this side-slip in early experiments in aviation did not break the scene. For we were all held in the thrall of our townsman and his art.



## THE PURE IN HEART

AUNTY Robinson who lived near the banks of the Arkansas River, contributed much to the wonder of my youth. She was a very aged colored woman, very small, with a face full of soft lines and a voice like velvet. Her cottage was vine-covered, a clap-board affair, set flat upon the ground, without foundation. The ground served as a kitchen floor and the door thereto had a latch string. Inside there were other survivals of the past in the way of ancient utensils and wooden benches, all of them the more antique in contrast with a small and then modern clock with a very short pendulum and a prodigiously loud tick. The clock was altogether the most industrious mechanism I have ever seen. It rattled on day and night, filling in the pauses in conversation, with a runaway persistency, punctuating the stillness of the afternoon with a saucy record of fleeting time and seeming to resent that it had already done so much and there remained, in recording, so much to do. At night, it had usually beaten the family off to bed at the command of its monotonous energy, before all the stars were fairly out.

Aunty Robinson had a great affection for the clock. There is no doubt that to her it had a personality. I think she selected it because it did have a personality. For she personified so many things—Time itself among them. Indeed her partiality for the clock may have been grounded in the fancy that its tremendous alacrity, as an attack on Time, made Time so much the more definitive and finite.

Aunty Robinson's attitude in this, as in other things, excited my interest. It may be that I was already

inclined to her view of things, but it is more likely that she inoculated me with her ideas—at least to the point that I found with keen disappointment, as I grew older, that Jack Frost was not a person, that the Storm King was non-existent, and that the Devil's potato wagon was a myth.

Aunty Robinson not only regarded Time and Space as persons, but she similarly endowed the seasons. Winter was a worthy personal opponent, and Spring a personal friend. I have heard her talk to dahlias and geraniums affectionately while watering them and in the same breath murmur to the brassy summer sky in gentle protest against its cruelty. She exacted from the family dogs and the cat intellectual powers equal to those of a child, and with a good deal of success when her manner was in reproof of them.

As a boy I gave Aunty Robinson's attitude, toward inanimate things, grave consideration. A great many things in my life kept me open to conviction about beliefs not founded apparently in reason. The seeming fortuity of lightning, its mysterious selection of certain trees, and their subsequent immunity, concerned me not a little. The persistency of a summer drouth, its voracious ferocity against the corn, its demoniac absorption of clouds that promised rain, its satiety when the last blade had curled and the last nubbin shriveled, and the rain came in torrents—but a week too late, never seemed to be satisfactorily explained as results of the law of chance, being no law at all. The visitation of the grasshoppers—once in a cloud which darkened the sun—devastating the face of the earth—was not lightly to be dismissed as a mere truant hazard out of the cosmic grab-bag and without direction or purpose. In any event there was a satisfaction in Aunty Robinson's formula of putting it

up to the lightning, the drouth, and the grasshoppers personally.

Not that Aunt Robinson blamed anything—or as she would have it—anybody. Not she. For she never had an antagonism with her personified universe, or any of its parts. She had had a lot of trouble too.

Before the war she had been a slave in Missouri. She had heard of Kansas, the free state, and after prayer, sustained by some sublime assurance from her Lord, she ran away in the night. She told me the story many times. She kept the North Star, which was a person holding a light for her, on her right, which kept her headed into the west. The first night she was pursued. She prayed many times and always He was at her side, lifting her to her feet and guiding her on. The posse missed her and went beyond, then doubled back. She prayed again in a little wood as the posse came upon her. He was at her side again. The posse passed by her, she could almost touch some of them, and she crept on. Once she found herself in a morass, full of floating folk with gleaming eyes. She prayed and was sustained. I think in all she was fourteen days and nights in flight, hiding by day, creeping on in the dark, with her friend in the far north always loyally on her right side and her Faith sustaining her.

Aunt Robinson never took the least credit to herself for her successful flight. She had been directed. Apparently her only part in it was prayer.

One afternoon outside her cottage door she had concluded once again the story and as I had exhausted my powers of interrogation in extracting the last detail, we sat in silence. The day was in the deep sleep of midsummer. The sun beat upon the baked earth and the leaves of the cotton-woods, crisp from heat, glistened in the sunlight, while the shadows of

house and fence lay thin before us. Over all there was the profound hush which is sometimes born of a summer's day when the song-birds seek the thickets and are silent and even the busiest of insects are still.

Suddenly Aunty Robinson became intent, and without changing her position, or raising her voice, said: “Child. Listen.”

It was silent as before. I did not question her. It was plain that she was hearing something which I did not hear.

“Bells,” she said in the same soft even voice. “I hear bells—above.”

I knew that the bells she heard, it was not for me to hear. But I did not doubt her. I am sure she heard them.

At camp-meetings Aunty Robinson was long a notable participant, with the power to guide those pitching on the dark seas of doubt to the bright haven of beyond-understanding Peace by the sign of her shining faith. Now as I think back upon her I wonder if somewhere the little runaway clock, which survived her, still ticks on.

## THE MINISTER

TUCKED away in every man's memory is a picture of the church he attended with his mother when he was a boy. the congregation, the choir, and the minister.

I have such a picture. I find that the years have done a number of curious things to it. The arrangement of the pews, their color and the scroll-design on their ends have survived: the scenes shown in the colored glass windows, which I must have studied for years, have faded entirely. I have the most vague notion that a sheep figured in them, but that may be invention.

Similarly the once familiar congregation, each unit of it then so clearly limned in my mind's eye, has become a pale, impersonal wash—a single, random stroke of the brush running the faces together and veiling them from me. Through the veil I can still make out some figures dimly—among them Mr. Mosher, a very lank man, loosely articulated, who wore galloways and stuttered, and his wife who was very pudgy and tied her bonnet strings under her chin. Both were very humble folk and very meek. But they do get through the veil. Not so clearly, I can get the Chatfields, a numerous family all in a row, and graduated from the tallest to the smallest, with the smallest always sliding from his seat. Near them is E. Woody—I think it is E. Woody, the carpenter, but I can not be sure. I am more certain about the Neelys. I cannot be mistaken that I make them out—Mr. Neely was short and round and comfortable among his pretty daughters. I get a definite outline too of Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Allen, whom I envied because they lived just across the street from the Methodist church, and, when the sermon was over,

they didn't have to go so far to dinner. I can just make out Dr. Fabrique, and Mrs. J. E. Caldwell, and down in front in a high stock, sitting very erect, Mr. Nessley who had been a minister himself long before the war. Further down in front, I cannot visualize, but I know he is there, in a big chair, by himself, Father Bliss. And I think I see Mr. Fuller—Ella Fuller's father—but there is no real certainty about that. It is a very vexing thing to have so familiar a scene as this sink into the shadows. The men who passed the collection baskets—a part of the services which tremendously interested me (I could tell by the piece on the organ when it impended) how well I knew them then—believing them to have been chosen as a particular mark of public confidence—how utterly they are gone.

The choir is almost as difficult. For years, once a week, I studied that choir. I noted the slightest change in its attire. A new feather on the alto was an event to me, as was a new necktie on the basso. In season and out, every Sunday I reached upward with the soprano for the high notes, and downward with the basso for the low tones. And yet I get out of the picture now only one of that choir. He is quite clear. In truth he could not be more clearly limned. This was Hiram Imboden. I can see his pleasant face before me now. I can see his earnest, business-like performance of his part, as though I had witnessed it yesterday. I can hear him lift his voice in leading the congregation upward into realms of vocal worship which bring yet, in memory, the balm of benediction.

In front of him, between him and the congregation, I can see another figure, as clear to my mind's eye as a man in the flesh—a short round figure, well knit together, with a big, smooth head on a very short neck, wide open unflinching eyes and an orator's mouth—

which opened with a precise evenness and closed with a trap-like finality on every period. There is nothing indefinite in my memory of the minister—Bernard Kelly. Against the dim shadows of the congregation, he stands out in cameo clearness, complete to every detail.

The impressions of Bernard Kelly I gained as a youth are those which remain with me. A long time after I saw him in the pulpit, I knew him in public life, and sat at his feet to learn in the science of public polity, but the lines he left upon my sensitive plates, when I was a boy, remain the ineffacable record.

To my youthful mind, he had the exceedingly great virtue of militancy. He believed what he believed and was ready to fight for it. There was a considerable school in that day which held that a minister must be something more than a man, and, by the same token, something less, something more in pious isolation, something less in aggressive vigor in public affairs.

This school made no headway with Bernard Kelly. He had been through the Civil War. He had drawn a big black line between his own side and the other side. He left no twilight zone between them. He knew his side of the line, believed in it, fought for it.

In the years to come, long after he left Wichita, he was to become one of the leaders of his political party in Kansas, and great confidence in his judgment and reliance upon his power was to be shown by the leaders of his party in the nation. They recognized in his fighting qualities the product of the Civil War, and the wonderful appeal his personality made to the men who were the product of that war.

Few men on the platform ever reached the minds, hearts, the imagination of the Civil War veterans as Bernard Kelly did. Description, denunciation, senti-

ment, scorn, appeal and defiance shot from his lips with the rapidity of a machine gun. He had a military set to his shoulders, an inexhaustible store of physical force, and a voice which carried like a rifle-ball. His platform manner was his own. He had one entirely unique method of emphasis—snapping the sole of his boot on the floor with a crack-the-whip-effect—which wrought upon the feelings of a veteran audience in a way marvelous to behold. In exhorting his comrades-in-arms, he called them “beloved” merely by the way of vigorous address, and not to be soft-spoken.

When this strong, spiritual leader came to Wichita its men were engrossed with the will to build a city. It was the prepossession of vigorous hard-hitting souls. Bernard Kelly was a hard-hitter among hard-hitters.

That was the idea of the minister I gathered in the church, the picture of which I carry in my memory, a militant minister of the gospel, who pronounced the terms of the law, and bade men obey. I have heard since in the realms of religion much subtlety of exposition, and not a little of critical analysis, and some disquieting defenses of the self-evident, but as I turn back to the old congregation and the minister who faced it every Sunday morning, I ponder much on the power and the glory of the commanding voice of spiritual authority, plenary, ultimate, direct and unadorned.



## THE DOCTOR

PROBABLY no one man ever saw as much of one community as Dr. Fabrique saw of Wichita. From the beginning of the town he had a prosperous practice, the extent of it limited only by the pathological provision which requires sleep as a prerequisite to living. Indeed Dr. Fabrique's career, at one period at least, might be described as a desperate contest with the community, in which the community savagely assaulted the minimum of sleep allowed the doctor and the doctor as desperately struggled to maintain it.

The doctor might turn in with the rising sun as the rest of humanity was turning out, and having entered three hours of repose on his side of the ledger and advanced so far victoriously against the inroads of the community, find himself haled out of bed in the middle of the morning and sent for an all day drive into the country. It is true that he usually took a boy to drive or a man from the livery stable, and the counter-attacks against the community he delivered, while he jogged along over country roads in deep sleep, helped bring his books back at least in sight of a hope of an eventual balance.

For many, many years Dr. Fabrique kept these books of account in his struggle with the town, adding a three hour sleep here and a five hour sleep there and occasionally swelling the sum total for the month with a full twenty hour stretch pillaged with great glee from the town when it was off its guard.

This is not saying that Dr. Fabrique could not have parleyed with the town. It is saying only that he would do no such thing. He could have run up a white flag any time and the town would have been

heartily ashamed of itself. But Dr. Fabrique asked no quarter, and if the town had ever so far forgotten itself as to show sympathy for him, he would have blamed himself.

In truth, Dr. Fabrique joyed in fooling the assailants who were seeking to put his leisure to the sack. There was never any suggestion in his manner that he needed sleep. There was no physical hint about him anywhere, any time, indicating weariness. His great height, his deep chest, broad shoulders, strong legs and a remarkable tranquility of countenance above a full beard all stamped in him the function of sleep as one of humanity's unnecessary and inconsequential customs which he disdained to follow. Of course he did sleep, he needed sleep, but he never let the other side know it. First and last, the community kept his side of the sleep ledger pretty well scratched up and with meager and irregular entries.

So, as I say, Dr. Fabrique saw more of Wichita than any other man, because he was awake more hours in the twenty-four. In another way he saw more. He called on people who were face to face with the mystery of malady, the mystery of birth and the mystery of death. Face to face with either of these, folks care little to conceal, and not being concerned with revealing, are very much as the good God made them—which makes them very interesting indeed. Dr. Fabrique was equally considerate of the poor and the well-to-do. There were no rich in those days. He was not a respecter of persons, as the Bible has it.

I do not think that any one once seeing his manner in the sick chamber could ever forget it. He would step to the bed, and looming large above it, study his patient. It would be rank nonsense for me to guess too confidently at his system, of course, but it seemed to me that in these moments, he was marshal-

ling the whole range of his experience to bring the simple use of mere visual observation into full function as part of diagnosis. Once when he so loomed above me, and I was giving him an elaborate, albeit exact, catalogue of my symptoms, he expressed in a grunt an undeniable wish not to be interrupted in his observation. This may have given me the idea I have set down here.

More than any physician I have known, Dr. Fabrique kept successfully the placid air of inscrutability which experience teaches doctors to show. In Doctor Fabrique it was a remarkable facial tranquility. No hysteria could read encouragement in that face, by hook or crook, and many a desperately sick soul found re-assurance there.

Dr. Fabrique bore one of the few French names in the town. For a long time, a certain portion of the population pronounced it in three syllables with the accent on the third. Eventually the community adopted a single pronunciation—making the name dissyllable and accenting the second.

He came to Wichita from the South. He was not given to talking much about his early life, but I was not very many years along before I had it, or enough of it, to seduce the doctor in giving more of it whenever opportunity offered.

When the California gold discovery spread like scattered electric flashes through the land, it touched young Fabrique. Drawn by the yellow magnet he made his way to California. He tasted all the bitter of the roughest mining camps and what little of sweet they had to offer in the way of self-reliance, courage and caution. Loaded with gold enough to satisfy and not enough to make him want for more, Fabrique made his way back across the Isthmus through all that motley throng which shuttled between the east and the west

by the sea route. When Fabrique landed in New Orleans, he was in rags. Some of the sharpers of that day, fancying certain geological indications in him, were on the point of smelting him down, when he was rescued by an official and set on his way home in safety and with currency in pocket in place of gold in the lining of his coat. Afterward in Memphis, he went through a yellow fever scourge and was himself stricken. He came to Wichita almost as soon as the town was started. In some way he was connected with a saw-mill, just how I don't remember. A saw-mill on those prairies had no future. Dr. Fabrique had a future and was soon in the practice of medicine.

The home he built in an early day grew room by room through the years, without the benefit of architect. When he decided he needed another room, he just added it, and probably left it to the carpenter to couple it on wherever he pleased. It was the only home of its kind in town.

Eventually, I have reason to believe, Dr. Fabrique came nearer to a balance in the sleep ledger he kept in his head. He succeeded in surgery to a notable degree. With that success came a greater measure of leisure. That closed his accounts. For he kept no other books except in his heart. In his office he had stored his bills receivable. Once in a while he would run them over under his thumb like a pack of cards. With some entirely uncommercial philosophy of his own, he discriminated between them. Some of them he presented for payment. Many, many of them he never presented at all.

## THE SCRIBE

For a period of forty years there was hardly a convention in Wichita a mass-meeting, a notable trial, a big revival, a horse race, or a stock sale without Farmer Doolittle, the reporter taking notes.

Now my affection for him is so much a part of me and has been so much a part of my whole life that I find it difficult to set down, in epitome, all that I saw in him in my youth. In fact, I must put aside the desire of writing an appreciation of him, in order to crowd in a few views of a most remarkable character.

First—his unique individuality—no one ever saw him, without immediately looking again, no one having seen him, ever forgot him. Thomas Nast, the caricaturist happening along in early days, no sooner saw him than he had him down in black and white. It would have been impossible for Nast not to have sketched him, after he had once laid eyes on him.

Second—his stationary age—to me he was never a young man nor an old one. Physically he seemed always the same to me—the same extremely long, extremely thin figure, the same unbearded kindly face. This impression of mine was borne out by his mental attitude. One decade with another, he kept alive the same keen interest in the instant event, and left the future to the young men and the past to the old.

Third—his utter indifference to the prerogatives of political, commercial and social rank—in all his life he never entered the presence of any one except on the assumption of equality—a charming composure that won many a striking interview.

Fourth—his unfailing championship of the under-dog—for on many occasions the prisoner-at-bar looked in vain for sympathy from stern judge to adamant jury, from stolid bailiff to icy counsel and found friend-

ship only in the long thin man who was in the court room taking notes.

Fifth—his talent for homely narrative—for in all the years he wrote, without the conscious grace of rhetoric, he touched the product of his pen with a distinct style—his own. I think I am within the truth when I say I never knew a writing man who cared so little for words as words, or one who gave so little attention to composition. When driven to it by the necessities of exact quotation, he used stenography—and here, true to his character—he used a shorthand system which he had invented himself.

I will not extend the description. He was not a writer at first—but a farmer. One night Farmer Doolittle drove to town, tied his horse to the wheels in an open lot, pulled the wagon cover over himself under the wagon and went to sleep. Cheers awakened him. He arose and hunted for the origin of the cheers. This proved to be a political meeting where the Congressman of this district, Tom Ryan, of Topeka, was holding forth on the tariff. He was explaining raw material and finished products. Farmer Doolittle listened awhile, arose in his place and leveling a long and accusing finger at the orator, demanded to know if wheat wasn't a finished product for the farmer. There was quick rejoinder and a rapid-fire debate and great entertainment.

Speaking of this incident, afterward, I asked Farmer Doolittle what was the secret of successful oratory. He laughed and said it was the assumption of the speaker that he knew everything about his subject and that the audience knew nothing about it.

One night down on his farm he wrote a communication to the paper and signed it “Farmer Doolittle.” My father sent for him and asked for more communications. So while his name was George Litzenberg, it disappeared, and Farmer Doolittle took its place. A

little later he moved to town and eventually went into the newspaper game for good.

I knew him before his entrance into the newspaper field. I was first attracted to him by a buffalo story.

It was still possible in the early days to leave the town in the morning, hunt buffalo in the afternoon, and sleep at home that night. The herds of countless bison were veering to the west to escape the professional hunters who were making sad havoc with them, to barter their robes and hides. But occasional bunches, detached from the main herds, swept through the land to the west of town. Frequently the newcomer traveled out to the west to hunt them.

In an incredibly short period the buffalo were wiped out. In the succeeding years a big prairie-fire would leave a vast expanse of carpet, of carbon velvet, dotted far and wide with patches of white, the calcined bones of the former monarchs of the plains. One of the earliest forms of traffic in this region was the collection of these bones and their sale in Wichita for shipment to eastern markets.

It seems that at this period, a party invited Farmer Doolittle to a buffalo hunt. The herd was not hard to find. It was large and the beasts were confused and easy prey. Farmer Doolittle picked a big bull and brought him down.

Then to the surprise of his companions, he threw his rifle on the ground and said: "This is not hunting: it's murder, and I am through with it." And he came back to town.

His revolt against the buffalo hunt was probably a part of a peculiar attitude he had toward animals in general. He had a most interesting hobby which opposed the theory of reason in animals to the commonly accepted view that they act through instinct. He had a long list of personal observations to prove this, a list that included the actions of snakes, frogs, birds,

horses and dogs. His understanding of dogs was quite extraordinary. For many years he was accompanied in his reportorial rounds by his dog "Don." He talked a lot of intricate things to "Don," on occasion and "Don" did seem to understand. They were inseparable, in and out of offices, in elevators, street cars, anywhere. In the old county conventions, the picture was not complete without Farmer Doolittle at a little table on the stage and beneath the table "Don," surveying, with lolling tongue, the rows of delegates, snapping his jaws shut when the debate warmed up and advancing to the footlights and looking eagerly for a chance to join, when it looked like a personal encounter. In the court house similarly "Don" attended all trials with his master, and was probably entirely sympathetic with his master—and for the defendant.

As part of his keen interest in the instant event, Farmer Doolittle had an astonishing capacity for enthusiasm over all the activities of the town. It was an entirely tolerant enthusiasm as well. He rejoiced equally with the minister who had succeeded in raising a thousand dollars to complete a steeple to the church, and with the gambler who had compelled the dealer to open the safe at midnight and get out another roll of bills. He shared the simple joys of the waiter in the all-night restaurant as he narrated them to Farmer over the coffee cups, and commiserated with the night policeman in the inevitable grievance which all well-regulated night policemen cannot be happy without. He felt all the joys of victory with the triumphant candidate the day after election, and then hunted up the defeated aspirant and showed him that he was bound to win if he tried it again at the next election.

He was a reporter—a recorder of events—the day's historian—a scribe of the law of life in the living thereof—a diamond of many facets—but a diamond.



## MY MOTHER

My mother was unafraid. I shall always remember her so—as without fear. There are some people who come into courage through passion, some who can summon courage through the call of crisis, conscience or duty, some who can conjure up courage as an aid to daring. Such courage is almost always manifested in a more or less dramatic way, and has much advertisement. But there are some people who have a quality of courage which is the mere absence of fear, a kind of courage which does not often show itself dramatically. My mother had that quality of courage. I never saw her show fear, and I don't believe she ever did show it.

When she was a little girl, her parents loaded her down with two Christian names, Mary Rebecca, which she disliked. One Sunday morning she had been left at home asleep while the family was at church. She made her way to church, walked up to the minister, in the midst of his sermon, and said: "I want to be christened Victoria." Her father came forward, took her up in his arms and the minister so christened her.

In the border warfare period, she was a skillful rider—and to the end of her days she thrilled under the vibrations of a taut rein over a prancing horse—and just at the outbreak of the Civil War, she made a long, hard night ride from her Kansas home into hostile territory on important business of war in connection with her brother Scott who was killed early in the conflict.

In that period when the little town in eastern Kansas where she lived was excited by the alarms over threatened Indian forays, and the like, while the men were

away in the war, she it was who gathered the women and children in the courthouse and prepared for defense.

In the days which I am recording, she was small, slender, blonde, with the mild blue eyes which go with the quality of courage I have indicated. She had an alacrity and energy in movement which impressed all with whom she came in contact with a sense of her exceptional capability. It impressed me with something more than that—a capacity for command.

She had a cook, Sarah Rosenstiel, her first here in Wichita. Sarah was from the East—Illinois—and mortally afraid of Indians. One day my sister Kate and I, who had been left at home, alone, with Sarah, saw riding toward our house over the prairie three Indians. We notified Sarah, who took one terrorized look at them, locked the front door and bundled us together and out of the back door—and met the Indians face to face. Sarah surrendered. The Indians made known by grunts and gestures that they wanted something to eat. Sarah piloted them into the house, cooked up everything in the larder and fed the Indians as they probably never had been fed before. When they had finished, they proceeded to trade Sarah out of numerous knick-knacks about the house, giving in exchange beaded moccasins and other leather things of their handicraft. The pale and trembling Sarah, offering no protest, saw the bulk of our minor household ornaments disappear in the Indians' gunny-sacks. Then my mother came flying in through the front door. She took in the situation at a glance, picked up my father's cane and went after those Indians, and as she belabored them, cried out an Indian word, “Packachee,” familiar in those days, which translated was equivalent to “Clear out and be quick about it.” The Indians wavered a moment: then ingloriously fled. I stood and

watched in stark wonder that so slight a woman, single-handed, could put so many savages to flight.

One night, a bitter night, when she was alone with Kate and me in the house, we heard through the storm a cry of distress. While Kate and I held a light in the window, my mother darted out across the prairie into the driving snow and found the Englishman, "Baron" Nitorth, drunk and down. She managed in some way to get him up and to guide him into the kitchen. He dropped on the floor before the stove in a stupor, while Kate and I clung together in a corner. We were sent off to bed. But I can still see my little mother sitting above that bedraggled form, and ministering alone to its desperate needs through the long, wild night. I remember that one day afterward when my mother met the "Baron" on the street, he bobbed in a succession of curious little foreign bows, removed his hat and stood uncovered as she passed, in an attitude of infinite respect.

My mother in her younger days was the one in the neighborhood who carried order back into a household when death held it helpless. She had a particular poise in the matter of the dead and a singular command over the emotions of those bereaved. I saw this and marveled. She often performed the primitive and then necessarily neighborly act of "laying out" the body, and the while directed the distraught members of the stricken family into domestic duties to divert them, with a cool control that helped them mightily in bridging the awful hour.

Once she sat at the death-bed of a neighbor's wife with the neighbor and, to spare him, sent him to another part of the house on an errand. He had been gone but a moment, when she heard him fall. She rushed out to him to find him dead. It was a day I remember in our neighborhood—a winter day—the

Christmas season—a home of little orphans—with a father and mother taken in the single passing of a winter sun. I do not know what they would have done without my mother. In that hour in that home, she must have seemed an angel.

My mother had many joys. One of them was to read aloud. She had the dramatic instinct, and something akin to hypnosis in her use of voice values. Her favorite was Burns. I don't know where she obtained her knack for the Scotch idiom, and I doubt if she knew where she obtained it. But she had it. When Tam o' Shanter was in full flight before the clutching witches, in her rendition, the older members of the family grew alert and drew to the edge of their chairs and I went to bed, wide-eyed, with my back to the wall all the way there, and the cover over my head, once I was in.

My mother also had her share of sorrows. She lost five children. These were her great sorrows—with another. He who had held her in his arms when she was christened Victoria, her father, a little time thereafter, had joined the cavalcade which was streaming westward to the California gold-fields. He was lost on the plains or in the mountains; no word of his death or the manner of it, ever came back to her, although she waited for it all her life.

I have said that she had courage and command. She had also a third great attribute—faith. She was most beautiful in her faith. Just as her courage was the absence of fear, so her faith was the absence of doubt. It was a single, stable, fixed point in her character, as strong, as enduring, as immovable as a granite mountain. It graced all the activities of her life. Against it as a background her courage, her capacity for command, her faculty of quick decision and direct action, her kindness, her charity, the high quality of

energized purpose that drove her gifts of mind and heart from thought to action, from action to habit, from habit to character, these attributes grew and glowed in the added glory of a life that never questioned that we shall be changed, that we shall not sleep.

This was my mother. In this world, I was early in her debt beyond all reckoning.

## MY FATHER

To meet the limitations of a miniature, to focus so large a life, as my father's life was, on so small an area as this, I must put aside his dramatic part in the early history of Kansas, his many political activities, and save in one relation, his editorial career.

I know that to some his notable relation to Wichita seemed that of a capable editor, who sought the infant town as a location, sounded its praises in his columns through the years, rejoiced in its growth, partook of its prosperity and once arrested the impetuous spirit behind that prosperity with a definite and laudable purpose.

That was not the image he left with me boy and man. For, in this single editorial relation to the town, he left with me, not the image of an editor, but the image of a prophet and a poet.

I have always believed that his choice of Wichita as a home was largely in obedience to inspirations that were only incidentally materialistic. He was born in the mountains of Virginia—the name Marshall came from the Chief Justice—and before the Civil War had crossed the plains and lived in the mountains of Colorado. He came back to the prairies because he loved the land of plain and sky more than he loved the land of rock and star. He believed that somewhere in this “encircling vastness” (the description is his) on “the white, dewless margins of light drifting sand” of the Nile-like Arkansas river there was to be born an imposing city, a Peerless Princess. He saw the prairies as “a vast and lonely Yet to Be,” in which the earlier, greater Egypt was to be born again. His word for this was “palingenesis.” What a word! Yet, nevertheless, fragrant of the Pharaohs.

There was then in truth little choice of locations for such a dream. Here the Big Arkansas river and the Little Arkansas river joined. The confluence physically distinguished the spot—little else did. A huddle of sod-houses and yellow, unpainted shacks had succeeded a cholera-stricken Indian village in its rights to the shade of a few ancient scraggly cotton-woods, when my father arrived and started his paper. He was then, as ever, scrupulous in dress, wearing usually a silk hat of latest bell, a small-boned, nervous man with scant reddish burnsidcs, very alert, very reticent, and always difficult of access—detached.

From the first issue he painted the prospects of the town in rainbow colors. The certainty of its ultimate ascendancy became at once to him and seemingly to most of his readers, the postulate from which every mental process proceeded. Loyalty to this assumption was expiation of sin, for in that loyalty, differences in religion, in politics and in social rank sank into second place, and the accusations which grow out of those differences and by which men convict one another, were negligible. Differences existed, of course, but within the limits of loyalty to the town. One of the chief of the earliest clashes was an almost feudal conflict over what were to be the main thoroughfares of the city when it should become a city.

As time wore on, my father marshaled many moving arguments to justify the vision of the builders of the Peerless Princess. He dwelt upon the vast tributary territory and its future wealth in grain and kine. He demonstrated by historical citation, an ingenious law of equi-distant markets. He wrought romance out of the coming needs of commerce with which to adorn his prophecies. His incessant note was certainty. The vision could not fail.

The note became to me a kind of editorial incanta-

tion. His audience was, above everything else, an audience of builders. They were men and women who had come into this land with the same exaltation as his own—a fever to create. Under the spell of their desire, voiced in his dream, the town grew. I was a witness to its amazing growth. The sod-houses and the unpainted shacks melted away and brick and stone took their place. The booted cow-boy and the feathered Indian faded from the scene and the busy real estate agent and resplendent speculator succeeded them on the crowded streets.

As the change was wrought, not slowly, but with a speed that surpassed the greatest expectations, the editorial incantation rang in a higher note, more insistent and more mystical, yet always certain. There is a magic wrapped up in rhythm—in the act of repetition—be it on a drum, in a verse or by a gesture. Something of the kind in the effect of my father's boom articles on the community was evident. At the height of the excitement his chance reference to any section of the town is said to have affected values there. General Wallace, the author of “Ben Hur,” reading once one of these “boom articles” from my father's pen said that “every line had a fife and drum in it.”

For a period everybody in town appeared either to have grown suddenly rich or to be at the brink of fortune. Multitudes from many sections, a cosmopolitan crowd, poured into Wichita, seeking adventure in quick wealth by the route of early realty investments in a city of certain future.

In many respects this was the most interesting period of my life. It covered the short span from my sixth to my sixteenth year. Was my interest due to the glamour of youth? Not wholly. There was a touch of romance about it all that turned older heads than mine. For while there were no dragons left to supply



teeth and no Cadmus to sow them, here was similar sorcery. The population multiplied over night. Railroads came winding down across the prairies seeking this center. Crooked foot-paths through the town grew into ordered side-walks. The old rut-scarred trails were transformed into crowded avenues. The corniced temple supplanted the shanty and advertised its pride in new, and, to me, dizzy heights. Each man's vehicle on the streets vied for place with a strange tram car which was everybody's. The feeble street-light, locally known as a "blinker," went out forever before the incandescent competition of the arc, which shortly after its installation confused, one night, the wild geese in their flight and drew them, like moths, fluttering down into the streets.

In the midst of this, some of the opulent townsmen noted that my father, who made no realty investments, was garnering little where he sowed so richly. During his absence, they furnished the room where he wrote with lavish outlay—in silken rugs, ormolu cabinet, bronze, marble and pier-glass, so that the old bare den suddenly flowered into a regal sanctum, worthy of Thebes.

He was very proud of this. Here he sat, and, with a prophet's vision and a poet's witchery of word-craft, he wound up the charm. The city spread out across the prairies to the distant farms, new and more remote additions were platted weekly, factories, alien alike to their raw material and their selling markets, loomed against the sky-line, clerks deserted their posts and merchants their books and workmen their tools to join in the mad whirl of speculation. Today's values vaulted over yesterday's, and tomorrow's soared above today's

This was not building: this was delirium. My

father knew the perils of excess, and the terrible penalties of reaction. He did not hesitate. He was loyal to the vision. In the seclusion of his sumptuous sanctum, he resolved to save the town. The next morning the headlong population paused curiously to read his editorial “Call a Halt,” and by sunset of that day soberly to realize that, as a breath melts into the wind, the boom was gone.

## THE MUSIC MASTER

I WONDER. Did Professor Sickner, music teacher, plant a seed in our garden which, two or three hundred years hence, will come to wondrous flower? I wonder.

Professor Sickner floated into Wichita on the flood of the first boom and remained behind when so many fickle folk went out on the ebbing tide. His coming set a mile-post along the highway of the town's musical development, and my own.

Wichita had always been musical basically. It would be safe to wager that the first white man here had a fiddle. Organized effort to record a cultural advance in music appeared very early. That brings me to my first introduction to the art. I entered the field by a back-door. My whole interest centered not in the town band, which would not be unusual in a boy, but in one quite subordinate part of the band, the snare-drum. For a long time this instrument so fascinated me that I did not hear, and so did not mentally catalogue, the others in the band. This particular snare-drum was played by a curly-haired barber, Lon Kistler.

Only after I had satiated myself on his performances, did I consent to admit the other instruments into the picture as a necessary background. Even then I did so by degrees. I accepted first the bass drum, and a little later the grunting tuba and stopped there. I know now, as I did not know then that very primitively, and very properly, I was concerned only with the rhythm. After a time I examined curiously and embraced the alto horn and the tenor. I was a long time in making my peace with the cornet. Despite its monopoly of the melody, it seemed to me, in my

early experiences, always to be interfering with the rest of the band—the rhythm and the harmony. Gradually I came to understand its leadership and to accept its melodies when they occurred in its lower register.

There was ample opportunity to become acquainted with the cornet. For it seemed to be the one band instrument in a town band which demanded practice. As I write an old alley in Wichita rises before me, an alley, Sunday morning, with its coal-sheds and butcher shop smoke-houses, and mountains of dry-goods boxes and in the midst of it, the town's cornettist bruising his upper lip and his musical soul against the flatted high notes of *Trovatore*.

However the town did not stop with a brass band. It had an orchestra. This held forth at the opera house. It was led by Antoine Misener, who worked on the railroad section with a shovel in the day, and fiddled with a bow at night. I had no sooner reconciled myself to the cornet, than I took on a bitter feud with the violin. Its high notes distracted me, so much so that when the orchestra lost the beat and Antoine lifted his bow to bring it back to measure, I always felt relieved. I like the 'cello and the bass-viol and the flute, but curiously had a contempt for the clarinette, which, because of its mouthpiece, I believed to be a lazy man's substitute for the flute.

In time between the town band and the orchestra, I began to separate the concord into four voices and to distinguish them—but I always listened primarily to the harmony, and while long ago I changed my mind about melody, I still direct myself first to the rhythm, then harmony and only incidentally to tune.

Soon the crop of pianists appeared. Instruction on the piano-forte in the frontier town was regarded as a field open only to women, and piano pupilage as

fit only for girls. The only man admitted to the sacred circle was a white-bearded visitor, named Sheldon, who appeared at intervals with a small satchel, tuned the instruments and then mysteriously disappeared again, striking during his visit a few sonorous chords, but refusing to play when asked with an air of one who considered himself altogether too much of a man for such trifles.

The women who had Wichita's early musical education in hand, so far as the piano was concerned, were martyrs. The community for the most part, and despite its large German contingent, had a decided leaning toward certain hopelessly elementary compositions—among them "Silvery Waves" and "Shepherd Boy." Against this the women music teachers fought valiantly for years, but with only partial success. They battled forward, step by step, until they entrenched behind Schumann's "Traumerei," and there the contest deadlocked. The town did accept "Traumerei," with a kind of unholy show of pride in its ability to recognize it.

There was always a certain subdued rivalry among the women teachers. Whenever a new teacher appeared with a new "method," she recruited a circle of champions who were not content with endorsing the new method, but also insisted that numerous stubby-fingered children had had their "touch" ruined by old methods. But while there was rivalry in this, in the main attack on the community's tastes, the women teachers marched shoulder to shoulder.

Then Professor Sickner floated into town. He was a man and he taught piano. If the town hadn't been so busy with its boom and other strangers, I believe it would have challenged Professor Sickner then and there. But he was in town and in operation before the town really knew it. He threw "Silvery Waves"

into the ash barrel without apology, dropped the "Shepherd Boy" into a well, and trampled even "Traumerei" underfoot—even "Traumerei."

It was a daring thing to do, but he did it. He wasn't so very pleasant about it, either. A tall supple man, with very long, white, tapering fingers, a pale face, nervous hands and feet, he had little patience and no compromise in his nature. He refused to perform on the piano to impress the parents of the prospective pupils; he refused to forsake finger-exercises for "pieces"; and he literally threw his long arms around the town, forced its head back and poured Chopin and Beethoven down its throat. But worst of all, he actually advocated the piano for boys.

To him music was an art and there was only one road to its shrine—and that road industry. After his day's work, he would hurry home to work in his garden—which he loved—thinning his strawberry plants and pinching the parsley back.

I can see him now in his "studio," his long form bent over the keyboard, a directing pencil in hand, beside a bewildered boy who kept the measure under his left hand with a monotonous persistency while the fingers of his right fluttered over notes that tinkled like distant bells one instant and cracked like rifle-shots the next.

In the end Professor Sickner gave up piano instruction and went into business or devoted himself to his garden. But he was at the piano-forte a long time in Wichita. Did he plant a seed there which centuries hence will come to flower?

The art of music is long. I believe no single generation can germinate it. When grandfather, father, and son, over and over again, have thought in its notation, then at last comes one who speaks the speech of the soul—which is song.

No one yet has caught and written down the music of the prairies. It is an elfin thing—the music of the prairies—like shimmering threads of summer heat, now here, now there, now gone. It is a cosmic thing—the music of the prairies—like velvet rumbles of receding thunder-clouds, now deep, now faint, now gone. It is a moving minstrelsy—the music of the prairies—with a range reaching from a tinkling treble that trembles into silence, but is still sound, to a droning double bass which is the music of the spheres itself.

No one yet has caught and written down the prairies' symphony. Did Professor Sickner plant in the brain of some bewildered boy the seed from which it will some day flower? I wonder.

Now I know only that if it is ever written, he who draws his spirit back from its ecstasy, to set it down, in his flesh will have seen God.

## A FRIEND

Among the thousands borne to Wichita on the full tide of the first boom was Leonard Washburne. He had the most fascinating intellect in many respects I have ever known. For a long period one of the puzzles of my life was that in the abundant output in humanity the world had to show, Washburne was not repeated. Nor did the world ever offer to me his approximation. In time I grew to believe that my estimate of him was touched with some extraordinary kind of exaggeration, but I was never sure it was exaggeration and I am not sure now.

Physically Washburne was Greek marble. He was tall, lithe, athletic, handsome with cheeks like a girl's, quick in color. He was over-nice in his attire, over-groomed usually, and guilty of surprising little affectations in manner, which were annoyingly sporadic and not habitual.

There was about him something elusively feminine—elusive because it was covered up with every attribute that characterizes the male. He was pugnacious, an able man with his fists, a high jumper, a fast sprinter, an insatiable consumer of tobacco and a good judge of a poker hand or a race-horse. But when all was said and done if Washburne had been of the prize ring, and he was quite capable of a career there, he would have returned to his corner at the end of the round and dabbed his face with a lace handkerchief.

During most of the time I knew him he was personally in debt in a multitude of little sums. I have seen a great many brands of indifference to debt in my time, but I never knew any one who was as coolly unconcerned over it as Washburne. He was incapable of



suffering offense. He did not know what affront was. Strangest of all his oddities was his denial of spiritual affections. It was quite an alarming trait this, and one who knew it as I did tried to excuse it as a pose. It wasn't, however, a pose to the best of my knowledge.

Washburne was about three years my senior. I was seventeen or eighteen when I first saw him. I disapproved of him, his girlish complexion, his foppish attire, his manner.

He was everything to me that I believed a young man should not be. He was not serious. I was. I think if most men will look back over their years they will discover that there was a remarkable period of mental activity in their lives just before they reached their majority. I know I had left my numerous boy friends, of whom I must write separately some day, for books. Sometimes my consumption of printed matter between my fifteenth and nineteenth year does not seem possible to me, as I review it. I must have read all day and most of the night to have waded through the mass of matter. I doubt if I had a purpose. I was enjoying myself. It was everything—drama, romance, poetry, history, what not.

If I could have been convicted of leisure at that period, evidence would have been found in my presence before the shelves in a book-store in search of a fresh line of attack. At such a moment Washburne accosted me. I resented the intrusion. He talked Charles Reade and I fell back on Lamb. He talked Lamb and I retreated to Congreve: he followed eagerly and, to shake him off, I swung down through the centuries, and entrenched in Chaucer. He quoted Chaucer, and threw in quaintly a little Bede. Then I surrendered. Not because he knew all I knew and so much more, but because of his charming enthusiasm through it all, and, wonderful to behold, his total lack of pedantry.

I knew at once that I had had an intense emotional reaction. It was then and sometime after an innocent admiration for his mind. It was to become a deep affection. In the time which was to follow, during which we were almost continuously together, I think he returned a modicum of the admiration. But never by word, glance or gesture did he show affection for me.

At this time Washburne was not a writer. He was a reader. He worked in an abstracter's office, and read at night. When he read he forgot everything else—including food. I knew him to read through Saturday night and on through Sunday morning, omitting breakfast. It was not that he was omnivorous which impressed me. It was his uncanny knowledge of the mechanism of letters. It was from him that I first learned that the style is the man, that the art of writing is the translation of personality into print. I have seen him take an ordinary news item from the daily paper and transpose it into a half dozen styles—setting it down as Bulwer would have written it, as Thackeray, Dickens, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, E. P. Roe and H. C. Bunner. He knew the quality of words—again in an uncanny way—for he had no Latin and no Greek, and therefore no knowledge of roots to guide him.

For a time I believed that his mind was merely analytical, and not constructive. But I came to know that he had description, invention, philosophy and humor in extraordinary degree.

Most of the people in Wichita who knew Washburne were not aware of his talent. He never wrote for the newspapers while here and he did not bring books into his ordinary conversation.

By and large he used a patronizing air toward me. He grew to use my few talents rather unkindly. He was infinitely charitable with any writing of mine in a perfectly maddening way. I believed I had a consid-

erable imagination and I waited for him to signify that he had discovered it in me. But he gave no sign.

It seems rather absurd now—considering our ages—but Washburne took charge of my mental activities with the austerity of a gray-beard guardian. He dictated certain authors who should be read and forbade others to me. I remember he barred Zola and prescribed Daudet. His attitude was one of genuine, and in that elusive manner of his, feminine solicitude.

As to my attitude toward Washburne I was as certain as ever I have been of anything in this world that he would eventually be entered as one of the greatest lights in English literature.

He grew deeper and deeper in debt. One night two strangers in town met him in a restaurant by chance, recognized his talents and carried him away. A little later his matter appeared in the Chicago newspapers. It was all excellent. A good deal of it was humorous—some of it serious and classic. As he grew in newspaper prominence in Chicago I knew that he was only starting on his career. I wrote him, but he did not answer. I never saw him after he left our town. Apparently he put me out of his life.

At the beginning of his career he was killed in a railroad wreck near the little Indiana town where he was born. He was riding with the engineer at the time, for the exhilaration of the thing. A year or two afterward I visited his birth-place. None of his relatives was like him. The last one of these to see him alive was a young woman who came to see me and tell me that just before he bade her good-bye, the morning of his death, he took a small note-book from his pocket, read to the young woman a list of names, and coming to mine, repeated it and said to her:

“He was the best friend I ever had.”

## THE LEGISLATOR

THE first boom cast up on the strand in Wichita and when it had receded, left Tony Merrill, the first of a long line of crusaders I have known.

When he came within my focus he was driving a dray. It was a disconsolate dray. Merrill was a disconsolate drayman. His team was a disconsolate team. Between jobs Merrill, occasionally, prompted by the presence of a few loiterers, would climb back to the end-gate and from the cart deliver to his whistling audience which showed hardly enough interest to be curious, the speech which was burning him up.

Like all his kind he was not gregarious. Associated effort would have entailed organization, and organization would have fettered him. Like all his kind he thought in diffused fundamentals, which meant that he championed extreme action. Like all his kind he added to all his proposed remedies the element of immediacy. Physically, too, he showed the ear-marks of his uncompromising kind, the dull pallor, the burning eye, the tumbled hair.

When I saw him and heard him I fancied him to be a sort of Wat Tyler, snatched out of early England and set down here. His preachment was that things were wrong, and that things should be righted drastically and immediately by legislation.

While I am not certain about it, I have reason to believe that Merrill came to Wichita from a farm. During the boom in Wichita there was a certain tragic evolution in process of development in the countryside. Generally the townpeople knew nothing about it, and were to know nothing about it until the veneer of rural pride wore through and exposed it. That the town-

people did not know rural conditions is quite natural. There is an easy urban belief that a farm is automatically self-sustaining—the comfortable theory being that cheerful labor applied to fertile soil produces wealth. Perhaps many of the early farmers thought this too—perhaps Merrill thought it. The passion of the period was land hunger—and there was not much economic thought about it. I should say that Merrill had satisfied his land hunger for the moment and had ended up with a dangerous case of economic indigestion.

For after the early farmers had possessed themselves of the fertile soil and enthusiastically applied labor to it, the result was not wealth. They found that they had left a third ingredient out of the formula—money. To obtain money they mortgaged their farms, hoping by mixing soil, labor and money to pay off the mortgage and then to begin the production of wealth. A great many things deferred that hope. Virgin soil, however fertile, can be a recalcitrant thing. Hazards of drouth and insect pest are difficult items to forecast in a budget. The times were extravagant—there were aspirations in the air that were not to be resisted—in the need of modern implements, new creature comforts and new pleasures, among them the cabinet organ. These complicated the accounts and devastated net balances.

The mortgage began to pinch. As it crowded down on the farmer, the value of his land also began to sag, closing up the gap between its worth and the encumbrance upon it and squeezing out his equity. To his imagination this spelled eventual eviction.

I have never known a more courageous group of men and women than these pioneer people. There were years which made the heart sick—years when the horn of plenty in the promise of June turned to a bludgeon of dearth, famine and distress in the actualities of

August, the swift passage from the bursting greens of hope in spring to the empty browns of despair in autumn. There were years of fat yields and lean prices. As time wore on, the date of interest payment, at first negligible, grew to be a haunting thing known to all members of the family, poisoning their simple joys, tainting the food they ate, blurring their prospect of smiling field and sky. Toward them all marched ever this periodical levy upon their dwindling resources and back of it always loomed the black shadow of the day of final settlement.

Over a long period the farmers showed no sign to the townpeople of their distress. First, they were a proud people and dreaded an exposure of distress more than distress itself. Again, they had learned, as we all learn eventually, that there is capital in the simulation of prosperity. They were playing the old game a desperate debtor always plays with an uneasy creditor.

Here and there out on the farms there developed a knowledge of the ways of the law—the legal rights of interest charges, the effect of defaults therein, the power and the processes of foreclosure.

Also, occasionally, there was discussion in front of the church Sunday mornings or after the township meetings in the schoolhouse on the economic side of the situation, which usually merged into a debate over the tariff with a division of the crowd along the ordinary partisan lines. Most of the farmers, however, did as most of us do in a similar situation. They accepted it and struggled along.

But in some instances, farmers could not accept it. The mortgage pinched them off the farm. Probably it pinched Merrill off his farm.

His preachment indicated as much. He had no patience with the tariff explanation and the ordinary economic remedies. The whole system was wrong, in his

belief. The farmer who earned his bread in the sweat of his brow, he contended, was deprived of an equitable share in the distribution of created values by special privileges extended in the law to others. He burned with the belief that the only remedy was to change the law.

No one but the whittling loiterers paid attention to his pronouncements. Certainly the farmers did not. Eventually, he himself felt the pangs of land hunger again and joined in the rush to Oklahoma, an event which followed chronologically the collapse of the first Wichita boom. My recollection is that Merrill settled on a fine claim with a contestant as land hungry as himself, in a county named after the boomer, Captain Payne.

Soon Merrill was elected to the first legislature of the territory. Its chief business was to adopt an organic code for the new domain. As a legislator Merrill, as ever, believed in the potency of legislation. As ever he believed in extreme law and immediacy. He championed particularly for the new commonwealth the ancient but direct remedy for crime, capital punishment. He was for hanging. Capital punishment under his urging was adopted in a statute of his authorship.

After this achievement Merrill went home to his claim. There was a quarrel and a killing. Merrill was arrested and tried, the first man in Oklahoma to face, through the long dreary days in the stuffy court room, the dreadful death in the law he himself had framed. He wound up in prison. Years afterward he visited Wichita and I talked with him. He appeared aged and broken to me but he was bright-eyed and he still had a remedy for all our ills—in the law.

## “THE PRISONER-AT-BAR”

IN the back-wash from the sudden flood of population which turned the virgin prairie of Oklahoma into a settled commonwealth, magically from the rising to the setting of the sun, in the back-wash of this single day's torrent many people drifted into Wichita. Some came voluntarily. Some were conducted by deputy marshals.

Among those who were brought back was Adams, to be tried for murder in the high court here. His lust for land had led him at last to the shadow of the gallows. I attended his trial as a newspaper reporter. I was interested in it quite apart from my reportorial duties.

For I had watched during my youth the fever for land among men rise higher and higher. As the available supply of unoccupied public domain diminished, the demand fomented a frenzy. The opening of Oklahoma marked its climax. There was a dramatic fitness in the method by which original Oklahoma was opened. Subsequent settlements mostly were conducted by means of lottery, a drawing of numbers in which there was nothing more dramatic than the fickle element of chance. The opening of Oklahoma was a physical contest, in which the race was to the swift of limb, and the battle to the strong of will. As it turned out the prize went in many instances neither to the swift nor to the strong, but to the cunning who did not observe the rules of the contest. These slipped through the lines and hid in the underbrush and the ravines and staked their claims sooner than the law allowed. But the vast majority held to the rules, and at the signal dashed across the lines together in a scrambling search for homes.



I had witnessed this spectacle and for that reason my interest in the plight to which the prisoner-at-bar had come was more than reportorial. Adams sat in the court-room, a farmer, with huge hands, heavy feet, clad in cheaply stiff store clothes too big for him. He was bald-headed with a margin of dry, lank hair above his ears and a fringed mat of it over the flat back of his rather small head. He was not bearded. As I listened to the trial the whole spectacle arose again before me as a background. I had slipped down to the border the day before the Oklahoma opening. The trains were crowded to the platforms with men, women and children. In the car where I was wedged between a car-stove and a water-cooler, there were three babies in a vocal contest, a fist-fight and a kerosene-lamp explosion to divert me from my discomfort. Along the border that night the prairies were peopled with innumerable restless shadows, stamping horses in herds and bunches, mooing cows, bawling calves, and squealing pigs. Scattered about were vehicles of every description ranging from the covered wagon with a lantern beneath its curved canvas, down through the scale of buggies, trucks, buck-boards, racing sulkies, spring wagons, farm implements to wheel-barrows. Endlessly through the night along the border, distracted dogs, provoked by the strangeness of it all, kept up a bedlam of challenging bark and impassioned answer.

The next day I saw the start, the long cavalcade of men on horse-back, stringing out along the trails, and back of these a jumping, bumping caravan of vehicles, the lighter variety ahead, with steeds galloping awkwardly in the shafts, the heavier vans hopelessly behind with the horses lunging desperately into their collars. Over it all were clouds of prairie dust, like mist, and in the April air was the scent of old burnt-over prairie grass suddenly disturbed.

Here and there was evidence of a family that had chosen its claim—the covered wagon at rest, the horses already nibbling at the grass, the father and the boys busy with a map, a sun-bonneted woman on the ground in the shadow of the wagon, quieting a baby.

That night in a new-born city, I found myself possessor of a lot. I didn't want the lot, but as everybody seemed to take one, I followed suit. As the sun sank tents appeared all about me and dotted the distant prairies. Shortly after sunset a shot on a claim far to the west of us, claimed our attention. We saw settlers running to the claim. Among us all there was general condemnation. Someone had used a gun, and by common consent the gun was barred from this game. My neighbor, a Mr. Peoples, a man I had never seen before and have never seen since, having his tent up, invited me in for the night. I surrendered my lot and turned in, and finally dropped off to sleep, with the aroma of bacon and coffee in my nostrils and in my ears the echoing cry, shouted back and forth across the prairie from hundreds of throats: "Oh, Joe, here's your mule," the reason for which cry I have never known.

Adams had been a figure in this giant spectacle, this grand climax in the fever for land. He had taken a claim which is now part of Oklahoma City. Another man had also taken that claim. This was Captain Couch. He had been one of Captain Payne's colony of boomers. He had suffered arrest with him and eviction. When Captain Payne passed away, Captain Couch had succeeded to his title and his leadership. Unlike Captain Payne he lived to see the realization of the boomer's dream. I have forgotten virtually all the details of the tragedy which followed. Adams shot Couch down.

I can see Adams now as the jury filed in and the verdict of guilty was given. The prisoner-at-bar sat

very still, and did not seem to hear or see. Then very slowly he slid forward in his chair, his open, unseeing eyes staring at the floor.

I can see Adams now as he stood before the judge to receive his sentence. It was late afternoon, with a flood of sunlight aslant through the window back of the bench, with myriad motes floating in and out of the golden shaft. It was very still. A marshall touched the prisoner on the shoulder. Adams arose without assistance, and stood in his baggy, cheaply stiff clothes before the judge, his big hard hands clasped, his heavy feet together, still apparently unseeing and unhearing.

“Have you anything to say,” the judge asked, “before sentence is passed upon you?”

Into Adams’ face there crept a marble pallor, in his eyes there glowed a sudden fire, up along his throat the blood pumped through the elementary artery until it was swollen like a deformity.

Then Adams talked for his life. He told the story of his life. He was not an educated man—but under the stress of that awesome moment he had a crude but marvelous eloquence. He could not have attained this if he had dreamed that commutation of his sentence to imprisonment was to follow, as it did eventually. He was talking against a foe who had cold fingers already closing around his throat—death.

But I was interested in observing that when Adams had concluded his long speech and the judge pronounced the sentence that he was to be hanged by the neck until he was dead, Adams, no longer unseeing or unhearing, was, under the subtle sway of speech over a speaker, to all appearances, a normal man again.

## THE STATISTICIAN

COULD you have seen him, as I saw him, making his way along Douglas Avenue Saturday afternoon, you would have known that C. Wood Davis was a statistician.

With furrowed forehead, bent shoulders, in a longish coat, the style of cutaway which is neither in nor out of vogue, he did what little shopping he had to do, passed by the knots of debating farmers on the street corners without pausing to listen, climbed into his buggy and drove to his home on the Ninnescah River to the west—a tall, bare home without trees, with an over-supply of windows, which blazed afar in the sun from the little mound on which the house stood.

Of all the men and women in Kansas who in that day were trying to plumb the depths of their economic and political woes, C. Wood Davis plumbed deepest. Most of the farmers resolved their miseries into terms of personal helplessness before a mortgage that must be met and farm prices that would not meet it. Not so C. Wood Davis. Above all he was impersonal. Moreover, he was never helpless. He wanted to know why farm prices did not meet the mortgage, and he proposed to find out. In the days to come many men were to appropriate disconnected portions of his statistical expositions, and elect themselves to office. Public place had no lure for C. Wood Davis, and he must have suffered poignantly in the fragmentary misuse of his careful text and figures.

What spotless integrity of mind was his! How he scorned a loose statement. How he despised an error. How he hated lies. With what pious patience he delved, day and night, for the truth.

Few followed him. Few could follow him. The hour was not propitious for close reasoning and qualified conclusions. The farmers were growing angry, and were seeking relief through law by political action. Economic and philosophic discourse fatigued their indignation. Nevertheless many of them read the productions of C. Wood Davis and respected him for his frigid fealty to facts. However, from first to last, during the farmers' revolt in Kansas, he got little credit for the work he did. Far was it from him to expect it.

There was some captious criticism of his output—largely by the impatient shallow agitators who could not dispose of him with ridicule. But there was little of this.

Other restive farmers believed that C. Wood Davis was a Malthusian and the religious element in the farmers' organized revolt frowned upon the unkindly doctrine of that kindly old philosopher.

Now, as nearly as I can remember, C. Wood Davis neither denied nor affirmed the Malthusian charge. Still, to understand C. Wood Davis, it is a great help to understand Malthus. Malthus held that humanity tends to multiply in geometrical ratio, (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc.,) and food tends to multiply in arithmetical ratio (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.). It follows, if this be true, that population outstrips food production. Now Malthus countenanced population restraints as beneficial. C. Wood Davis did no such dreadful thing as that. But he did show that population was overtaking food production and that the ultimate high price of food, carried back to the basic bread-grain—wheat—would work a revolution in the standards of civilization, with the farmer occupying a new and enviable level therein.

It was the long view. It did not deal with townships. It dealt with nations. It did not deal with thousands

of bushels. It dealt with billions of bushels. It did not deal with years. It dealt with centuries.

Through the Wichita post office came letters to C. Wood Davis bearing strange stamps. He was in correspondence with professors in St. Petersburg, with doctors in London, with experts in Rome. He produced long tabulations of production and consumption.

The uneasy farmers found it difficult to take the long view. Their situation was made up of the simple compound of a mortgage and a declining price in wheat. To them it was dreary business to wait on population.

But C. Wood Davis being a statistician as well as a farmer remained an optimist in an atmosphere of almost universal gloom. He pointed out that from 1870 to 1890 bread-eaters in the world had increased two and a half times as fast as the material from which bread was made. That was the basis of his proposition and it was the only simple thing about it. For, standing alone, that proposition should have been reflected in 1890 by an increasing price of wheat. It was in fact declining. It was the qualifications of the basic proposition which complicated it and explained the temporary low price of wheat and the pinch of the mortgage. Here was the qualification. The per capita quota of land in wheat increased from .427 of an acre in 1870 to .443 of an acre in 1880. This trifling addition aggregated 6,400,000 acres. This rate of increase in acreage was not kept up between 1880 and 1890. In 1890 the per capita quota of land in wheat dropped to .398 of an acre. With the exhaustion of available arable wheat land in sight and a decline in the average yield of wheat per acre from 12.4 bushels in 1870 in the United States to 12.1 bushels in 1890, the certainty of high prices for wheat in the future was established. But what about the then prevailing low prices? They were due first to temporary heavy,

increases in acreage and heavy productions, (490,560,000 bushels in the United States in 1890 at an average farm price of 69.6 cents per bushel, as against 235,885,000 bushels at 94.4 cents in 1870) second, to a tremendous increase in corn production (from one billion bushels in 1870 to two billion bushels in 1890) third, the release on the world market of new supplies by the abrogation of the India export duty. (Exports of wheat from India 1871, 464,000 bushels; 1887, 41,500,000 bushels.)

It was not possible to follow C. Wood Davis' exposition by thinking in terms of a single year and a single section. It was necessary to study it by decades and hemispheres. He knew this and pointed out to the wondering Kansas farmers that while they were in great distress, there were others. He showed that the poor Indian ryot, while he had reduced his acreage over 1,000,000 acres, that moment was starving himself by exporting his product to get money to pay his land tax.

The Kansas farmer might be suffering now, the statistician assured them, but when the ponderous processes of supply and demand had gotten into motion, not to-day, not next year, but in the next decade and the next, then, he said, "the farmer will not be under the necessity of working from fourteen to sixteen hours a day; he will take his rightful place in the world and receive his share of the good things of life." That is, the farmer's distress was temporary. An early equilibration (his word) and high prices were assured.

He did not touch upon the relation of the volume of money to the price of farm products. That was a short view and the very one everybody was interested in. For there was the mortgage. That was personal. C. Wood Davis, being a statistician, remained impersonal.

He was an inveterate enemy of the grain option market. He hated the trade fiction which allows a man to have without holding, to own without possessing. The short-seller, he said, has “erected a toll-bridge on the highway of commerce where there is no stream to cross.”

Early in his life C. Wood Davis had been a general passenger and freight agent of a large railroad system. He tried to make rates that would put the property on a business basis. His superior rebuked him, saying they were to make their money out of construction, not out of operation. He ordered Davis to make passenger rates just sufficient to crush the stage lines and freight rates just sufficient to drive the ox teams out of the freight business.

C. Wood Davis wouldn't do it. His superior might as well have ordered him to commit murder.



## A MAN APART

I saw him the first time at night in a grove in Wichita with a large crowd before him. The flaring platform torches revealed him muffled in a great gray overcoat. Above this coat was a long, narrow head carried proudly. To my youthful eye, his figure and speech marked him as a man apart.

I intend to give here not my idea of John J. Ingalls now, but, if I can, the ideas about him I then held. The first Wichita boom was three years in the past. The opening of Oklahoma had come and gone. There was evidence of political disquiet among the farmers. But no one foresaw that the usual political mechanism, for the production of stable majorities, was so soon to prove impotent.

I cannot believe that Ingalls foresaw it. He was mentally a lion in courage. Timidity might have given him foresight. Audacity instead led him to dare satire in public life, and satire in public life is suicide.

If Ingalls knew it was suicide, and he must have known it, I think he forgot it, and for this reason: Following the Civil War, the population of Kansas aspired to culture.

The New England antecedents of the state indicated an approach to culture through education. Beyond education shone a brighter domain—erudition. Near erudition lay the field of pedantry. It is no part of culture and Ingalls did not set foot in it. But he delighted the weak folk who dwelt there, as he did those humble people who were seeking culture through education and the established erudite. All three classes were flattered by Ingalls' gift of intellectual and imaginative satire.

An intensely religious people laughed when Ingalls described the evangelical heaven “as a walled and castellated city leaning over whose comfortable battlements the celestial burghers contemplate, with complacent security, the elaborate contortions of their less-favored brethren in fuliginous realms below.”

Even the supernumerary county officials who lived on taxes and whose machine elected Ingalls to office gurgled when he derided Napoleon for selling Kansas at the rate of one hundred acres for a cent and then added: “And yet it may be that Bonaparte was right. He had, perchance, a premonition of the twenty-one different kinds of taxes that would be annually levied.”

A citizenship which was reaching for Ingalls’ intellectual levels, grinned when it read: “Men are not created equal physically, morally or intellectually, nor in aptitude, opportunity nor condition. The distinctions between men were established by act of God, and they cannot be abolished by act of Congress.”

When many men in Kansas were growing desperately poorer every day, they forgot it to quote approvingly Ingalls on a “poor man’s chance”: “What is needed,” he said, “is some legislation that will give brains to the brainless, thrift to the thriftless, industry to the irresolute and discernment to the fool. Till this panacea is discovered the patient must minister to himself.”

For Ingalls had early sounded the note of culture to Kansans and Kansas sat at his feet to learn and accepted satire as a condiment. Here was his instruction in culture to the Kansans: “Education, religion, and culture are conditions which must be developed, not formulas to be memorized. The Decalogue has no significance to a Comanche, and the attempt to civilize him by preaching is as senseless as would be the effort to change a Texas steer into a Durham by reading Alexander’s Herdbook in the cattle pens in Wichita.

The creature to be civilized must be elevated to a condition that renders civilization possible." So it was laid down by him. "Men," he added, "cannot become learned, refined and tolerant while every energy of body and soul is consumed in the task of wresting a bare sustenance from a penurious soil: neither can woman become elegant and accomplished when every hour of every day in every year is spent over the wash-tub and the frying pan. There must be leisure, competence and repose, and these can only be attained where the results of labor are abundant and secure."

There had come periods in Kansas when the results of labor were not abundant and secure. But there were the master's instructions, and the pupils' pride in him. In their pride of him I think that Ingalls forgot that satire in public life is suicide.

For Kansans were proud of Ingalls. His power in debate in the United States Senate, his intellectual prestige there, his elevation to the position of presiding officer, flattered his constituency. His knowledge of literature, his production of incomparable prose and one immortal sonnet made every Kansan glow over the state's possession of him.

They stood in awe of him as well. So that night in Wichita, under the trees, to me his figure and his speech marked him as a man apart. He held the crowd, hanging breathlessly upon his lightest syllable, not because he was dealing economically with a situation in the price of wheat which was impoverishing the state, but because he had the poetical power to rear civilization upon a foundation of blue-grass, although blue-grass would grow only in a small section of Kansas.

His quiver that night was bursting with arrows that had never failed him—one for Great Britain, one for the Southern Confederacy, one for the Democratic President, Cleveland, with his "dull, heavy, ponderous

wooden platitudes; his stolid and shallow deceit"; one for a "useless navy". Flashing through it all was the play of his satirical rapier, shining, keen and quick.

It is not recorded when Ingalls knew, later in Washington, that he had run himself through with his own dangerous weapon. It was plain enough in Kansas.

He had loved the state. It was his state. He had helped make it politically and intellectually. He had sounded its praises throughout the nation, he had written its glories with a tireless, facile pen. The revolution which had been smouldering in the farm houses was blazing nightly from the country school houses. Its existence was known only imperfectly in the towns and viewed there indifferently. It was a profound explosion of primordial popular passion. It was an enormous anger groping blindly for remedy for ills, but in its first flush of success, thirsting for revenge for wrong. It sought a personification of its enemy. It made John J. Ingalls a symbol of the system it impeached. It turned his own quality of daring against him. It stabbed him with the weapons of ridicule he had used against shame, hypocrisy and fraud. That which had been his satire became his serious assertion; that which had been his serious assertion became his satire.

In a pathetic appeal to Kansas he explained in vain that he was describing a condition, not inculcating a doctrine when he said: "The purification of politics is an iridescent dream." But the storm relentlessly swept him out.

Afterward, Kansas, recovering, put an image of him in marble in the National Capitol. It is the only statue to a satirist in the world I know of. He stands there now, as I saw him under the trees in Wichita that night—a man apart.

## THE TORCH

ONE of those who called at my father's editorial sanctum occasionally was Mary Elizabeth Lease. When she passed through the reporter's room where I worked, I remarked her for several reasons. First, I suspected her of bringing poems, and I could not reconcile a woman of her strength of character dabbling in verse. Second, I did not fancy the use of her Christian names, for she was known to us as Mary Elizabeth Lease and not as Mrs. Charles Lease, wife of the druggist. These two items out of the way, I recognized that altogether she was easily the most distinguished visitor we had.

It was her air that gave her distinction, not anything she had done. But somehow I knew that Mary Elizabeth Lease would write her name large before the world some day. It was her air, I have said. She was tall, proud in her bearing, with the dignity of an abbess. Her forehead was very high and, as her whole face, alabastrine, and her eyes were lustrous. She had majesty in her carriage, and with it all a most proper feminine sense of the vogue. Her dress was in fashion, as was her hat, with due regard for quality as well as cut. She had an interesting family and was a devoted mother.

There was everything that was satisfying in Mary Elizabeth Lease's physical presentment and nothing particularly startling until she spoke. The man or woman who did not halt in wonder at the sound of her voice had no music in his soul. I have heard no speaking voice in my time to equal hers, in man or woman. It was contralto, rich, even, mellow, of a quality beyond that possessed by any of the great actresses of my knowledge. It was, like her mind, normally tran-

quill and authoritative, but it could be elastically responsive to the needs of humor and of scorn. She could command an audience of men with the ease of a queen with courtiers; she could stir their risibles if she desired, and she could halve an opponent with a single slashing sentence.

When Mary Elizabeth Lease with the wonderful voice passed us reporters to visit the editor with her poems, there was no intimation from any source that she was to have part in the public affairs of the state.

For while the yeast of unrest was working mightily on the Kansas farms, and something of it was known in town, it was put aside as a negligible incident, as part and parcel of a chronic condition of rural complaint.

It is true there were fragmentary stories of strange nocturnal transactions in the country, stories better known to the clerks in the stores than to the officials in the Court House. There had been a sort of revival among the farmers of the old Grange movement, it seemed. The traditions of the old Grange had been social and cultural. Politics had been barred. The new movement, called the Farmers' Alliance, might be expected reasonably to bar politics. The farmers could be expected to take care of cunning candidates who attempted to use them. Besides, the Farmers' Alliance did not admit lawyers. That was an important point in proving it innocent of political design.

Yet the clerks in the stores in town knew there was something afoot on the farms that had a decided political appearance. The meetings of the Alliance were secret; they were opened with prayer and closed with benediction, but between these two brief, trusting invocations to heaven there were rebellious hours, hot with vocal denunciations of things on earth, and not infrequently the chaplain, and every Alliance had one, who

was best at benisons, was most expert in excoriation. The Money Power, the Octopus, had made money dear and farm products cheap. The railroad magnates had taken in excessive rates the farmers' dollars to pump substantial values into their watered stock. The political machinery of the nation had been aborted to the use of privileged classes through unequal tariffs. The speculator, who toiled not, waxed fat on the brokerages levied on the sweat of the tillers of the soil. The remedies proposed were numerous.

The most popular remedy was dictated by the most pressing necessity. This was more money to meet the mortgage. From one end of the state to the other rose the clamor for an increased per capita in circulating medium.

The Alliance men, as their rebellion grew, pushed aside the few protesting souls who insisted that the Alliance should keep free of politics, rushed forth from the country school houses, and carried their defiant indignation out into the open. They gathered the clans in groves and held picnics. Unlike any previous movement in Kansas, these picnics bristled with the activities of the farmers' wives. From the first they were foremost in the onslaught on the system under attack.

The picnic started early and ended late. The farmers who found themselves grown eloquent over night in school-house debate, tried their powers in the larger forum. The chaplains prayed. The great crowd, under a choir-leader, sang songs of mingled hope and despair, the favorite being a consignment to oblivion of the Republican and Democratic parties, under the title of "Good-bye, old parties, good-bye."

Some discerning Alliance propagandist, at this moment, in conversation with her stepped into the meshes of Mary Elizabeth Lease's marvelous voice and acted on an inspiration. Before we in town were aware that

she could speak at all, reports from all over the state came pouring into Wichita that Mary Elizabeth Lease had become a flaming torch and was setting the prairies of Kansas afire with her eloquence.

She was equipped with the moving language of Israel, she knew her lines in Shakespeare like Ellen Terry. Terse, cogent, epigrammatical, always, she sprang in a day full-armed in oratory, irresistible before great crowds of Kansas farmers, hundreds of whom until now had not exactly approved of a woman making speeches.

Here was a woman making speeches and a woman indeed. She did not flatter the farmers. She did not cajole them. She did not sue for their favor. She lashed them for their political indolence, scorned them for their past partisan prejudices, mocked them for their unmanly civic servility. Through it all she singled out John J. Ingalls as the symbol of the system she was scorching with anathema.

How at last her hearers rose after they had been stung by the whip of her tongue, and how they shouted in angry consistorial confirmation of her command—"to raise less corn and more hell."

I can see her now as I saw her then, majestic, white, cold, but with the magic of music in her delivery, projecting that stinging sentence as clean, as direct, as shining as a thrown lance. As a youthful reporter on one such occasion I described her in a sketch, and I said she was not beautiful. Afterward, in private conversation, she challenged me good-naturedly about that. I didn't yield the point then. Probably I was mistaken. On this score youth is so often mistaken.

In the midst of this campaign in which she was easily the foremost figure, the political defiance of the Alliance men grew apace. Before the campaign was over they organized long parades of farm wagons, loaded with farmers' families, and invaded the towns.



Where many farmers in the past had hidden their distress, now they flaunted it. Many of them I suspected of wearing their most ragged coats for the occasion and driving their poorest teams. They were fighting for political power, and not only the clerks in the stores but the court house knew it. As we watched together the Alliance parade, mile upon mile, pass before us, my fellow reporter, David Leahy, said to me: "This is no parade; it is a revolution."

The voice of Mary Elizabeth Lease, more than any other factor in it, made it so.

## “THE REFORMER”

IN the bewildering hour in which the revolting farmers of Kansas stood in as much astonishment over their overwhelming victory at the polls as their puzzled opponents were over their crushing defeat, the one leader of the revolution who put the revolution in the apothecary scale and registered its precise weight was Jerry Simpson.

He knew that which so few reformers ever recognized—that inertia fought on the other side, and that in politics ultimately inertia always wins. He knew that tradition, the right of possession, convention in law, business and publicity, and confirmed social usages which thread civilization through and through and bind it together would gather at last around the static standard of society and hold the field for things as they are. You could attack them, bewilder them, temporarily confuse them; you could not permanently overcome them.

In the midst of the dizzy elation of the Farmers' Alliance men over their first victory, Jerry Simpson said to me, privately: “Normally Kansas is what Kansas is traditionally. Right now Kansas is abnormal. We reformers are fighting for a mud ball as big as a boulder; what we permanently win will be no larger than a diamond, but it will be a diamond.”

I think this conviction in Jerry Simpson explains the use of his gift of humor throughout his career, and the quaint echo of it on his deathbed. He did not propose to be tricked by victory into false hopes, or to be plunged by defeat into unavailing despair. So he set out to meet both with a challenging smile and a gird.

He had been long a reformer. It was as such that he cast his first vote for Abraham Lincoln. He had

been thereafter successively a Greenbacker, a Union Labor party man and a Single Taxer. Canadian-born, he had spent twenty-three years before the mast on the Great Lakes. After the Civil War he came to Kansas. He arrived in our part of Kansas with fifteen thousand dollars. In seven years of farming he lost all of it and found himself city marshal of Medicine Lodge at \$40 a month.

Why did this sailor come to Kansas? Once I asked him this, and he replied: “The magic of a kernel, the witchcraft in a seed; the desire to put something into the ground and see it grow and reproduce its kind. That’s why I came to Kansas.”

The first time Jerry Simpson came within my knowledge was during the campaign in which he had thrown over his city marshal job to become the farmers’ candidate for Congress against James R. Hollowell, a Civil War Colonel of our town—an eloquent man, a lawyer of parts, a congenial spirit, known among his friends as “Prince Hal.” In a speech Simpson, attacking Hollowell, compared his own lowly estate with that of Hollowell. Among other things he said: “Prince Hal wears silk underwear. I can’t represent you in Congress in silk underwear—I can’t afford to wear it.” In reporting that speech, moved by a youthful fancy, I substituted the word “socks” for the word “underwear” and quoted him thus: “Prince Hal wears silk socks: I don’t wear any.” Within a week, Simpson was known over the nation as “Sockless Jerry” and the “Sockless Statesman” and the “Sockless Socrates.” It is a noteworthy thing that sometime before that I tried to dub an Oklahoma reformer, named Daniels, as a sockless statesman but without success. But this time the designation stuck. The public is curious in its ironical relations to the truth—Daniels did not wear socks when I interviewed him and Jerry Simpson did.

The sockless story prospered because it conformed to the plan of campaign adopted by Simpson's opponents. This plan was one of personal ridicule. Simpson was attacked as an illiterate bumpkin and a clown. This proved to be a woefully deficient strategem.

Simpson turned the assault upon him with an adroitness that led his opponents into further blunders. To the taunt that he could not spell the name of his own town correctly he answered: "Well maybe I don't always spell the name of that town just right, but I wouldn't give a cent for a man who couldn't spell a word more than one way."

Simpson never had to meet the charge that he was a clown in a second campaign. Before he ran the second time, he had shown himself master of repartee in Congress, and Kansas knew it. Years afterward, Colonel Peter Hepburn of Iowa, himself one of the most dangerous debaters in public life, told me that in quick rejoinder he had never known Simpson's superior.

In Simpson's first campaign, his opponents were tricked into this charge of buffoonery by Simpson's platform manner. I have always believed he exaggerated it to lead his opponents on.

Simpson, in breaking into the good graces of a crowd, used certain means which come from the stage and not from the platform. He could "mug a scene" as the actors say. He could stir an audience in opening without a word, by a smile that was at once winning and warning, the attitude of a boxer who says with his eyes (and Simpson in this mood had a killing trick of quizzically lifting one eyebrow) "come on and beware."

During his campaign his followers showered upon him a measure of personal devotion accorded to no other reformer of that day. The ridicule which his opponents attempted upon him, reacted in a noisy affection among his adherents.

The body of his address was in the main serious, with only occasional flashes of humor. It evidenced painstaking reading. He had dwelt much with Carlyle, Hugo, Dickens, Burns, Shelly, Tom Paine. He knew Latin and Greek translation, as evidenced by his use of Socrates' word for the spirit—doemon.

He was not given to memorizing, but he had some things tucked away in his mind for use in emergencies. One night after he had been elected to Congress the first time, I heard him swing into a most remarkable period on "the invisible government." Some months later I found this in Carlyle's French Revolution. When I again met Simpson I told him so. "That's all right," he said. "I put the quotations in the night I made that speech, but you didn't know enough to see them."

With the exception of his first, all of Jerry Simpson's campaigns were hard ones. His latter opponent was Chester I. Long, young, aggressive, studious, logical and undismayed by the barbs of Simpson's speech. Under Long's tireless hammering the most clever of the Populist reformers was permanently pushed out of public life.

He did not last long after his retirement. He came back to Kansas and to Wichita. One day we heard he was in the hospital stricken and David Leahy and I went up to see him.

His little wife who had shared his fortunes from the old days on the lakes down through the Kansas days of obscurity and the Washington days of prominence was at the bedside. The son of the Canadian snows, the son of the lashing lake, the son of the Kansas prairies, with all these etched in the deep lines of his face, was passing over. Our entrance aroused him and he gave us faintly the same old bantering smile.

A few hours later he confronted death. "This is the real Doemon; all the rest has been a joke," he said and died.

## THE GOVERNOR

In my rounds as a newspaper reporter in Wichita it was my wont to drop in on Lorenzo Lewelling at his place of business. He was a big, pleasant man with a spreading pirate moustache, and a soft voice.

He was a dealer in farm-produce. Often we had earnest converse on a variety of subjects. One day it would be cheese, another day butter and another day politics. I would come upon him slashing a big wooden paddle through a trough of butter, and the subject for that day would be butter. With his sleeves rolled up to his elbows, he would seat himself on a box, smoke up and gossip. Why did people eat butter anyway? I remember he told me that it was for the healing qualities of glycerine. How did they ever discover rennet and make cheese in the first place? He figured it was an ancient accident. Was he figuring on running for anything next fall? He said he might, if things lined up right. I knew in a general way that he was after the nomination for one of the county offices.

He did run for office that fall, not for a county office, but for governor of Kansas. He became the Populist candidate and was elected.

The Farmers' Alliance by this time had evolved into the People's Party. It was an interesting evolution. The new movement began to die with its natal cry. It was born of a spontaneous protest. As it lost in spontaneity, it gained in organization, and organization in such a movement is the process of death.

When the Farmers' Alliance swept the state of Kansas, it annihilated Senator Ingalls, turned out most of the holding Congressmen, retired hundreds of county officials and seized the popular branch of the state

legislature, the state Senate being retained by a hold-over majority of the old party. The men sent to the legislature by the revolting farmers were an unusual assembly. They were country school-teachers, retired ministers, small town doctors, and farmers. They found one definite task before them and that was the defeat of Senator Ingalls. The selection of William A. Peffer as his successor was so incidental to this, that they chose the mildest-mannered candidate who offered, for William Peffer was no more typical of the protest which elevated him to the United States Senate than a summer zephyr is typical of a tornado. One definite task performed, the legislators turned their attention to legislation. I remember them as remarkably earnest, sincere men who were quite lost in parliamentary procedure. I remember their struggles with the subject of usurious interest. A low maximum in legal interest in a single state can work hardship upon the debtor in that state. I saw a great many astonished men discover this, and I witnessed one legislator, who was making a speech for a low legal rate, stop in his address, confess he was wrong, switch around and in the last half of his talk answer with spirit the first half of his own address.

The first legislative experience of the Farmers' Alliance in Kansas was not half over before its adherents concluded that state remedies in problems such as theirs were short ladders, and began to agitate for national action. There had been long in Kansas a sentimental propaganda about a coalition of the states of the Mississippi valley, north and south, a reunion of old opponents into a new mid-continent solidarity which would dominate the nation. The Farmers' Alliance had coddled this idea considerably. The need of national action revived the idea and with it the plan of a new party. In due course the People's party was formed.

The birth of the People's party meant organization and that in turn meant tendencies away from spontaneous popular fevers over principles and toward static dependency upon the personalities of leadership. Eventually William Jennings Bryan was to become the beneficiary of this evolution and gather through his personal leadership, the new party into the Democratic fold.

However, there was a long road to be traveled before this event. The new People's party was an attractive haven for aspirants for office. In Kansas it had the prestige of success. It could win and was to win again. But it had changed in many respects. Originally an expressed aspiration for a nomination in the Alliance was fatal. The office must seek the man, not the man the office. In the new People's party men were avowedly candidates. Again the Republican party in Kansas, first taken by surprise and overwhelmed, was fighting with closed ranks, organizing as it had never organized before, seeking to regain the ground it had lost so unexpectedly. This new offensive compelled the People's party defensively to put every possible emphasis upon its own organization.

Thus in two years the situation had changed. In politics, as in war—offensive is a vital part of defense, as defense is of offensive and a new political movement which wins in its first offensive is immediately weakened in its defense against the counter-attack. In that situation it rushes for help to close organizations as a duck to water.

So the People's party was soon the home of the confessed candidate and the cut-and-dried program.

One of the earliest of the organizers of the Farmers' Alliance around Wichita was B. E. Kies. He came from Michigan, founded a newspaper here, and actively directed the management of the new movement. He was



well-informed, quick in an argument and ready on his feet. His paper prospered mightily. He was believed to be an aspirant for the People's party nomination for a county office. Now this was the same place that Lorenzo Lewelling had in mind and a real contest was in sight, for both were popular with the farmers in the new movement.

No one but the principals in any political situation ever know all that happens in that situation. Sometimes not all the principals know. Certainly I, with only a reporter's access to political secrets, did not know all that happened in the situation between B. E. Kies and Lorenzo Lewelling. It has always seemed probable to me that Kies to remove Lewelling from the field of candidates in the county, maneuvered him into the field of candidates for the chief office in the state. Such things do happen.

At all events Lorenzo Lewelling was nominated and elected governor of the state. From first to last he had a belligerent time of it. At one time there was even a threat of armed conflict. A naturally peaceful man, devoted to domestic joys, with an affectionate family to fill full his cup of contentment, fate pushed him out on the firing line where the partisan shells were falling fast and furiously.

He fought well upon the whole. But he was in a battle at a time when the enemy gave no quarter, and where his own forces were weakened by the inevitable reaction from easy victories in the past.

When it was all over and he was back in town again, we used to meet occasionally and argue together over whether the discovery of rennet was really an accident, or if the ancients scientifically figured it out.

## THE CONSERVATIVE

Seated on the dusty edge of a cold forge in Bloss' blacksmith shop, in the days after the first frenzy of the rural revolt in Kansas, Hank Heisermann said to me: "We Republicans will last; the People's party will break. One reason is that this new party is merely tempered; the Republican party is annealed. One is brittle, the other flexible."

Bloss, the blacksmith, quenched a red-hot rod in a tub of water and grinned at the comparison.

"Another reason we Republicans will whale the day-lights out of that crowd of calamity-howlers," Heiserman went on gathering inspiration from the tumble-down farm wagon, just then suffering surgery, "is that people travel in ruts. For a time they may jolt out of the track, but their whole tendency is to get back to the grooves. You have to guide the horses when you are out of the ruts, but you let them guide themselves when you're in the ruts. Mostly people don't care to guide, for they're not very expert at it anyhow. The ruts are fighting on our side."

Hank Heisermann was a local Republican leader. Like all the other Republicans he had been taken by surprise when the Farmers' Alliance went into politics and swept the Republicans from power. Every minute of every waking hour since the cataclysm, he and his kind had been planning to meet the new foe in the future battles. Before that new foe appeared the Republicans had been rather careless about their organization. After the first battle, every device of discipline was employed to close up the ranks and to counter-attack.

It was a pretty stiff discipline by the way. It ex-

acted unquestioning fealty from partisans. It was given to "reading out of the party" a partisan who "scratched" a ticket. The spectacle of thousands voluntarily leaving the party did not deter the leaders from an exercise of this device. The local Republican leaders were convinced that the People's party could be most speedily destroyed by driving its leadership into the Democratic party, and quite generally they worked to that end. Therefore they persisted in the preaching that the Republican and Democratic parties were permanent and that the new People's party was not.

In furtherance of this idea, a very jealous supervision of party organization was instituted by local Republican wheel-horses. This close supervision was made possible by the circumstance that the new movement had swept most of the discontented element out of the Republican party and left the solidly conservative in undisputed possession of the party organization.

Tickets were placed in the field with the greatest care as to personnel, particularly on the score of party fealty. No chances were taken on a candidate who, once upon the ticket, might secretly "trade" a fellow candidate. The whole purpose was to present a solid front.

I saw the process of nomination, the first time, with real wonder. In my rounds as a newspaper reporter, I had come into fair knowledge of the mechanics of politics. But I did not know with what remarkable finesse a convention, and a resulting platform and ticket could be cut and dried by the men I met and talked with daily.

The temporary chairman was secretly selected the night before, a delegate designated to nominate him, lists of the committees on organization, credentials, order of business and resolutions were prepared, the chairman-to-be of each committee instructed when to

make the motion, and the temporary chairman-to-be informed who was to make the motion and given the lists. The permanent chairman-to-be was selected and notified of his coming honor and instructed as to the slate. He could not be, as permanent chairman, of great assistance in putting the slate through, but if, uninformed, he could be a dangerous obstacle.

The caucus the night before the convention was not an open affair and curiously within the caucus itself there were wheels within wheels. Only the inner circle in the caucus knew the slate, possibly only one or two or three men at most. I have often thought that the genesis of the political boss comes about through some such process.

The county convention met in the morning. It never met on time. The chief reason was that time was not needed. The temporary chairman having been nominated and elected was escorted to the stage. He was usually a business man. He had been notified the night before of his selection and had prepared a speech. Usually he was much flustered. He had the speech memorized all right, but usually he was anxious to make his oratorical voyage quickly. For there was always land in sight on the other side, and that land was a phrase and a list of names in his vest pocket. As the temporary chairman rode over the oratorical breakers and glided to the shore, he halted in his speech, took a long breath, expanded his chest, raised his chin and declared slowly and sonorously: "What is the further pleasure of the convention?" Simultaneously he slid the fingers of his right hand into his vest pocket.

The convention was then in motion. As soon as the committees were appointed, the convention recessed. This was the noon hour. It was then the aspirant for a county nomination discovered that he was not on the

slate. Very often he returned to the convention determined to smash the slate. Sometimes he did, but not often. More frequently, after he had gone down to humiliating defeat, he was called to the stage, and figuratively bleeding at every pore, elicited thunders of applause with the declaration: "There are no sore spots on me."

There was a world of humor in the old county conventions. At one of them the same Hank Heisermann, a soldier of the Civil War, a huge man with a wooden leg, was nominated once again for a lucrative county office he had long held. He could not make a speech and the crowd, knowing it, called loudly for him to do so. In a complete hush, he made his way to the stage, and balancing himself, said: "Gentlemen of the convention, I thank you. As I have tried to serve you faithfully in the future, so I will continue to do so in the past. Again I thank you."

At one of these conventions, a farmer, Mr. Thompson, a white-bearded man who said he had voted for Fremont, took the floor and denounced the procedure. He said that everything had been arranged beforehand, that it was a farce to ask him and other farmers to come to town and occupy the hard yellow chairs in that hall on the pretense that they were participating in the convention. "We would be serving our country better," he declared, "if we had remained at home between the plow handles. It is nonsense to bring us here."

This arraignment troubled me mightily. I had been privy to the pre-convention arrangements and I was abashed by the farmer's words. After the convention, I walked home with Hank Heisermann and I spoke to him about it. He asked me what I would like to do.

"Why not have a convention," I proposed, "without a preceding caucus, without arrangements beforehand,

without a slate? Why not call the convention together and let the delegates, farmers and all, do just what they please?”

Hank Heisermann stopped stock still, swung around on his wooden leg, and looming above me, exclaimed:

“No! Why, that would be anarchy.”

## A PRINCESS

Princess Eulalia looked something over thirty when I saw her, a comely creature, but a bit too heavy to conform to fairy-book prototypes. I was not, however, disappointed in my first view of a princess. For I had reached the point where I was not accepting evidence from print on any point. That is a condition of mind common to newspaper reporters in great cities.

Overnight I had become a newspaper reporter in a great city. That is how I happened to see a princess. For one could not remain in Wichita and see a princess in the flesh.

Aggrieved at my reportorial wage in Wichita, I took it up with my mother. "Light out for yourself," she said in lieu of expected sympathy. "Try your own wings. You will never know you have them till you try them."

So I had gone to Chicago. It differed much from Wichita. It was a big town in the raw state, fluid, fictile, formative, obsessed with its own rickety magnitude; so much the beneficiary of the factor of quantity that it was quite blind to any factor of quality. Being fluid it gave all manner of false values to initiative and speed. To be first, quickly, in any undertaking in Chicago in those days, was to achieve. The city thus easily overleaped itself. It staged an industrial fair for the world and seized upon the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' discovery as a date to hang the celebration upon. Time, however, being as indifferent to Chicago as to mankind generally, did not wait. The fair the city planned was to be very big. The four hundredth anniversary came and went without the fair. The city was not ready. It had been deceived

by its own ambition. It accepted the delay, ignored all sentimental considerations of actual anniversary, but retained an advertising relation to Columbus. Now this brought Spain into the picture, and with Spain, the bountiful Isabella, and so intrigued into Chicago a member of the reigning family of Spain—Princess Eulalia—whom I saw.

While Chicago in those days was fluid it had for me, on that account, revelations it would not have had otherwise. It gave me on a large scale what Wichita showed only in miniature, if at all. Kindred lines of business were pre-empting common geographical sections. The evolution wasn't complete; as where a stray leather warehouse was found lingering in a cluster of wholesale drygoods establishments. But the trade crystallization was in progress and the more striking because there was movement.

However, it was not in the physical conformations of a city in process of quick growth that the difference between my own town and this metropolis was most apparent. It was in humanity.

Humanity had poured into Chicago, in uncounted hosts, from all over the world, bringing its various languages, customs, and cuisine with it. The distractions of this polyglot population overslaughed the native Americans in their normal capacity for the assimilation which promises ultimate homogeneity. In this welter in which the community found itself, ordinary activities of the human family took on extraordinary exaggerations. To everybody? I think not. To a young newspaper reporter? Unquestionably. Luxury has never been to me so flamboyantly ostentatious as it was in those days; poverty has never been so sordidly abject; vice has never shown herself so helplessly shameless.

Perhaps this was so because as a young reporter in



a great city I saw it all in immediate contrast. In one night I sat at a banquet table upon which a famous opera-singer teetered and sang the drinking-song from "The Chimes of Normandy" crashing her glass of champagne into the chandelier in conclusion; followed a police officer into a den with its floor slippery with blood, to find crumpled in a corner, a man who had been hacked to pieces with a hatchet; visited a ball room radiant with light and life; bent with the attendant over the sheeted forms in the glass cases at the morgue, studying the pastey faces slowly one by one, in the dread and difficult identification of the dead.

My reaction from it all was a brooding sorrow. Life became to me a serious spectacle, to be written down as it was that those who could help might know it as it was. There was no market, however, for my serious matter. The lighter product of my pen, whatever of humorous touch I could give, was acceptable. Eager naturally for praise, whenever I won it through my lighter product, there was always the taint of the thought that it was unworthy in me to accept it.

Perhaps I do not make myself clear. Possibly I can not make myself clear. If I should say that I felt that any product of the pen that was frivolous was to an extent a denial of the rights to truthful record of serious facts, I might be near it.

I had no political propaganda. I did not care for politics. I wanted merely to paint the picture. But I knew perfectly well that I was alone in my desire. Besides if I had been permitted to indulge my desire, I might not have been able to paint the picture. I was spared the tragedy of that. I was not permitted to indulge my desire.

One night a great ball was given by the officials of the World's Fair. From our newspaper six or seven men were assigned to write up various features of it.

One was to describe the notables; another the costumes; another the decorations; another the music, and so on.

I was assigned to do "the man on the outside." It must have been intended that I should do a humorous skit. But I forgot.

I stationed myself in the rain outside the great building and watched the guests arrive. They were in a great flutter in their silks, satins, feathers, high-hats and shirt-fronts. About the entrance had gathered a silly crowd, many of them foreigners, ill clad, unhealthily pallid. At first curious, the crowd, pressing forward, came in conflict with the police who tried to push it back. Both the police and the crowd lost their tempers and grew ugly. The crowd included the arriving guests in their enmity to the police and I heard for the first time the ominous guttural gage of mob hate. It ended there. The rain increased and the crowd dispersed.

I wrote a faithful account of this, without any deductions to lighten my description. The city editor, a kindly soul, an Englishman, Ballard by name, took my copy at midnight, read it, called me in, tore my copy in two, dropped it in the waste-basket and said sardonically: "This is not the man on the outside, my boy; this is the lamentation of a lost soul." Maybe it was.

It may be that the sorrow and resulting seriousness I felt was a sombre mood due alone to my impressionable age. It was relieved at any rate by my diversion in the crowding incidents of a great city. Where one incident a week sufficed in Wichita, three or four a day occurred in Chicago to enliven one's life. I could fill a volume with the incidents of my reportorial days in Chicago, although I shall give but one.

That brings me back to Princess Eulalia. She had arrived from Spain, the guest of the city. One night Mrs. Potter Palmer, a gracious, beautiful woman had

arranged a great dinner for her. At the last moment, the Princess was reported to be in high dudgeon at her hotel.

Reporters were sent over to find the why and the wherefore of her indignation. The Princess was pacing up and down, speaking Spanish rapidly and angrily. Attendants were arguing with her. They finally induced her to enter her carriage.

When she was gone, the reporters found a man who knew Spanish and obtained an explanation. Mrs. Palmer's husband owned one of the principal hotels in Chicago. At the last moment some one with evil intent had gotten that fact to the Princess. Hence her indignation.

She had been asked to dine with the wife of an inn-keeper and she was outraged.

## THE WIZARD

BACK as far as I can remember, fishermen who bait their hooks with dreams and cast their lines into the sky have excited me. They do yet. For I have lived in a day when celestial fish were biting, and I have seen several whoppers landed. While the steam engine, the telegraph, the sewing machine and the reaper preceded me, my boyhood antedates the electric light, the telephone, the phonograph, the wireless and the aeroplane.

Now no one in the Wichita of my youth ever had more than a nibble. Occasionally someone would invent a patent-gate, or a window curtain or a burglar alarm, but these were minnows and never grew beyond the model stage. George Herrington of Wichita once invented a carrier to bring the milk in from the curb to the kitchen, and it provoked great local interest, but it proved to be a minnow, too.

So, upon the whole, my avid interest in inventions was not over-fed. I was the more hungry because of that, and have remained so all my life. For the inventor, against all competitors, commands my curiosity. Moreover, I have made it a point to know inventors with a deal of pride about it—as in the case of the man who thrills over the fact that he once shook a president's hand.

I have managed to know several notable inventors, among them Alexander Graham Bell, the father of the telephone; the Wrights, whose first flights I wrote up for home folks, the descriptions offending their sister Kate, as I found out later to my pain; Colonel Lewis who started in life teaching school at Walton, north-east of Wichita, and whose machine gun is credited with winning the world war.

So it was natural for me to go out of my way, when I was a newspaper reporter in Chicago, to meet Thomas A. Edison.

It was a Sunday morning. I discovered, by chance, that he was visiting relatives in the city. I traveled to that section of the town, presented myself at the front door to Edison himself, asked for a newspaper interview and was admitted.

My call must have seemed an annoyance to him. I was a very young reporter, and he held a position in the world which entitled him to freedom from such intrusions. But he tolerated me. Perhaps it was some revelation of my attitude of devotion to inventors, which persuaded him to grant me the interview. Undoubtedly it was an entire innocence of physics on my part which made him prolong it. For in physics I seem always on the point of understanding and don't, and skilled men dislike to give me up in despair.

It was so that morning with Edison. He gave me an interview that went afterward into many languages, and for nearly thirty years I have seen what must be fragments of it still floating about the world of printed words.

I fashioned my questions to avoid the handicap of his deafness—short general questions which demanded long, specific answers. What first attracted him to electricity?

The wizard caught the question. He half turned to an open window and gazed out on the spring sky and kept his eyes there while he talked on and on as in a soliloquy. He was a newsboy, a "butcher" on a passenger train out of Detroit. The people would gather at the little stations to buy papers carrying the news of the Civil War. He worked on a commission—the more newspapers he sold, the more money he made. Behind the windows of the little stations were

the telegraph operations—the station agents. In event of a big battle why couldn't these operators be notified and spread the word to the towns, so that when he came along he could sell more newspapers? He made arrangements with the operators. The big battle came, the flash was sent along the wire, the population poured down to the stations, and Edison, loaded to the gun-wales, sold out.

The magician was in a day dream. A wisp of hair had swung down across his forehead, his eyes had softened and were unseeing, his hands upon his knees, his chin dropping gradually over the little bow-tie. He was living his youth again—for himself and for me.

It was that element of profitable utility in the telegraph which had first attracted him to electricity. Without conscious effort and still in a soliloquy he went on through the development of his interest in electricity, and his inventions. He had given the history of it all, when his manner changed and suddenly he came back from the spring sky to me and said truculently:

"If I had my life to live over again, I would not go into electricity. It has meant for me misery—litigation, litigation, litigation."

I didn't believe he meant that. Something in his mood had tricked him into a confidence—into the kind of assertion men make to their intimates and do not mean—but do not make to newspaper reporters.

Not only did I not believe he meant it, but I hoped he would abandon the new mood, and go back to the day dream.

So I shouted at him: "I don't understand the multiplex. It doesn't look sane to me."

He laughed, squared around, and began an anxiously simple explanation of this miracle. There were moments when I almost had it. There were moments

when my face betrayed utter failure of comprehension. I did not speak. He read it all in my eyes.

Now I knew that Edison had so manipulated currents on a wire that it could be used by several people at once, half of them sending different messages and the other half receiving. It seemed to me that if a man should substitute railroad trains for dots and dashes and try Edison's scheme on a single track, and operate without wreck, I might grasp the plan. But this alternating current which multiplied a wire for audition and left it single to the vision—well, it was too much for me.

Laboriously Edison went over his explanations. Sometimes he believed he had gotten it to me. Then he doubted and tried another tack.

At any rate, he had swung clear and away from the other mood, and abandoning the multiplex and hoping to get him back to his day dream again, I asked him if man would ever fly and if he had ever tried to make a flying machine. He did not go back to the day dream. But he did prophesy.

He said: "Men must get away from the buoyancy chamber. They must apply themselves to the device that will mechanically levitate that which is heavier than air. I have tried it and failed. I once constructed a brass cylinder with a propeller at the end to be driven by exploding gun cotton. Theoretically it should have soared like a lark. When I started it, it stuck to the ground like a five-story brick building. But before you die you will fly. Men will fly. For man will yet steal the secret from the hawk and the eagle."

This interview was a great event in my young life. A quarter of a century later, I sat an evening through at dinner at Edison's side. I asked him if he remembered me and my interview. He remembered the interview. He had forgotten me.

## A GENTLE MAN

MY NEWSPAPER in Chicago sent me to Ohio to travel with William McKinley, then a candidate for governor of that state, and at the same time the most prominently mentioned citizen of the Republic for president.

I joined the party at a small town. There were six or seven newspaper men with the candidate. These informed me at once that the next town, to be reached that night, was a Foraker stronghold and it was Major McKinley's wish that we avoid offending Foraker's followers. Curiously I had missed Foraker's fame entirely and had to be informed about him and his relation to Major McKinley's career.

When we arrived at the Foraker stronghold, we were met by a noisy crowd, out of which our party finally emerged and, preceded by a band, drove slowly through the main street. This pageant was the center of a volcanic explosion of fireworks, the like of which I had never seen. The majority of the enthusiasts seemed convinced that the more closely they could send their pyrotechnics to the object of their affection the better he would like it. Balls of fire rained on him, on the band and on the newspaper men.

Major McKinley and his party won through to the local opera house and he made his speech. It was a set speech. It was without humor, a wholesome, unimpassioned declaration of faith in a protective tariff, a reference to the Civil War ending with a stanza, and a tribute to his political party and its achievements. The speaker had a placid voice, strong and pleasant withal, but even always. His chief gesture consisted of a stroke with the fingers of his right hand into the palm of his left hand which carried a little callous spot from the continual impact.



On the way to the meeting, the other and older newspaper men had been sizing me up. During this examination I made several bold assertions in order to establish myself as an independent, if dogmatic, thinker among my associates. It is a manner among newspaper men, newly acquainted. I asserted that I had never yet heard a speech without something cheap in it.

That night after the meeting my newspaper associates surrounded me and demanded my judgment on the McKinley speech. I approved of it except one paragraph, which I cited. The next morning in the smoking car, the newspaper men dragged me up to Major McKinley and made me cite the paragraph. It was an embarrassing moment for me, of course. The major neither frowned nor smiled. But he pulled me down in the seat beside him and asked me to tell him about myself. The others went away. He did not mention the paragraph further, but in that campaign he never used that paragraph again.

During the weeks that followed, I often rode for hours beside the major. I soon learned that the conversation did not prosper if I employed interrogations. The draw-bridge slipped up and the portcullis slammed down at any question mark. I have seen other public men with this attitude, but never in the same degree. Most men of this type of mind will smile or frown the question away. McKinley simply wouldn't hear it.

Naturally I wanted to know what McKinley thought of our Kansas crop of publicists. After an attempt or two I gave it up. He asked me, instead, to give him my idea of them.

The one thing I wanted to know I could not get. How did a man in sight of the presidency feel? What was the manner of longing that filled one when the White House was in sight? With what intimacy did the aspiration show itself? I didn't want this for the

newspaper. I wanted it to add to my knowledge of men and things.

Often in little towns when the crowd had worn him out, Major McKinley would slip back to my room in the hotel, throw himself on the bed, and lie there silently watching me write away. I knew he wanted rest, not conversation, and usually nothing passed between us.

One day I resolved to make the attempt and satisfy my curiosity. "Major McKinley," I asked, "How does it feel to think that you may be president some day?"

This wasn't impudence and he knew it wasn't. He looked me in the eyes, without the shadow of a frown, without the suggestion of a smile, and said: "I was telling you last night on the train about my sister Helen," and he went on with a story previously interrupted.

I knew then I had not offended him. Later I confirmed this. Eventually Mrs. McKinley joined our party. This took the major away from us in the smoking car. He was a great smoker and I made it a practice to go back and visit with Mrs. McKinley. This gave the major a chance at a cigar in the forward coach. On one of these visits I asked Mrs. McKinley, who was a dear soul: "Does the major ever talk the presidency to you?" She laughed and said: "He told me about your question the other day. It was funny for you to ask for he won't even talk to me about it. We'll have to join forces."

"Do you suppose he talks to anybody about it?" I asked.

"No, I don't," she said hesitatingly, "unless it is Joe Smith."

I went once during this campaign to Major and Mrs. McKinley's home. It was a plain home, modestly furnished, comfortable but without luxury. Both Major and Mrs. McKinley were the soul of kindness to me.

Indeed as I look back over the years, I remember Major McKinley as the most gentle of all men I have ever known. I saw him all hours of the day and night, under the most trying circumstances, in every possible environment of personal discomfort and annoyance, suffering the cruelties of a state campaign, where a candidate pays, in exhaustion, the last full penalty of popularity, but through it all I never saw him show petulance, or speak unkindly, or break by look, gesture, or attitude the placid surface of his supreme benignity.

He suffered much offense, but he never offended. He suffered much deception, but he never deceived. He suffered, at the end, the poisoned thrust of hate, and did not hate. He died, as he had lived, a gentle man.

## A RICH MAN

WHEN as a young newspaper man, I journeyed from Wichita to Chicago, I found among the Wichita folks who had preceded me there, "Bunnie" Mead. In time I returned to Wichita. Young Mead remained in Chicago and became a rich man.

Now I believed, in the days when "Bunnie" Mead was poor, that he would be rich. I did not indulge in this as an idle speculation. It seemed inevitable.

One of the pioneers of the Southwest was James R. Mead. Before Wichita began, James R. Mead ran a trading-post on the Whitewater river, east of Wichita. Mr. Mead was a remarkable man, a shrewd trader, a keen judge of men, wares and values, a student of the Indian's lore, as he was an authority on his tribal customs. He had passed years of his life among Indians. He knew them. His wife, young Mead's mother, I never knew. But one of the earliest recollections I have is boundless praise of her from my mother, who spoke of her personal courage with a kind of devotion. There was involved, in this expression by my mother, the story of a midnight attack on the Whitewater post by drunken Indians. I may have the story twisted, but as I remember it, Mr. Mead had gone to the Missouri river with his wagons for a new stock of goods. His wife, alone with the babies, was attacked by the red ruffians, and when they forced the door she felled the leaders with an ax and put the other drink-crazed savages to flight.

There may not be everything in heredity, but there is something in it, if it is backed up. Young Mead was born with a gift for trading and an unblinking courage.

His father took, as a homestead, one of the quarter sections upon which Wichita was built. Young Mead grew up in the atmosphere of town-building. He measured the hopes and hazards of realty investments and went in. He was still very young, and prosperous, when the collapse of the boom wiped him out financially.

He was known to the community as "Bunnie" Mead. Where he acquired this substitute for James, his real name, I do not know. I don't suppose he ever fancied it, but as there was no help for it, he suffered the imposition. Every one in the town knew him, more for his energetic qualities than for any other expression of himself. For, generally, he was of a taciturn disposition—a mild-spoken, brown-eyed, curly-haired youth with a watchful eye on the world, not given to rash adventure, but once in game, not given to caution, but once decided against a proposition, firm. That is to say, he was possessed of an unusual degree of alert discrimination with deliberate balance besides.

Now of all the productions of this most remarkable time, the most remarkable are the rich, as they appear to those who have neither the inclination nor the capacity for accumulation. To the mere spectators there appear to be several kinds of rich men. I spent considerable time in my youth trying to classify them. I never finished for I was always under the necessity of adding new classes. To me they seemed to range from the extremely conservative investor who emphasized security alone to the audacious plunger who looked only to rapid return. In between the two extremes were a multitude of rich people who differed not only from the extremes, but from one another as well, in conduct, outlook and incentive. Some of these men seemed to grow rich from the love of trading, some from devotion to a name, some from family pride, past, present or future, some from sheer emulation,

some from a sense of civic service, some from the joy of creation, and some from the deep-burning, latent fires which keep the soul hot with hunger for power.

It was always difficult for me to identify the rich men I knew in the flesh in the types of rich men portrayed in books and on the stage. Those offered by the drama were usually voluptuaries, who were the puppets of wealth and not its masters. Those offered in books were usually creations of fictional carpentry in attempts to demonstrate that as the purse fills the spirit empties, and so were painted devils to affright the eye of childhood.

Through the years I came to realize that there could be no successful catalogue of the rich, by classes. Moreover, in time I comprehended that there was no formula for accumulation. The copy-books in school prescribed saving. Later, I discovered that one can be penny wise and pound foolish, and that many people were. And lastly I found that Solomon, who knew something of the ways of wealth, was convinced that riches are not always to men who understand riches—but time and chance are apt to plunge their big hands in this business of accumulation.

So long ago I gave up my attempts at classification of the rich. But with the rest of humanity I never tired of studying them. And as I had known him as a youth and believed that he would be rich and he did become so, I watched Mead's career with interest and with gratification.

After young Mead had been in Chicago awhile, the bicycle craze swept the country. He found the market place for second-hand bicycles unoccupied. He occupied it immediately and in an incredibly short time was a national factor in the distribution of the popular vehicle.

Now three things in this chapter of his career great-

ly impressed me and led me to give him a class to himself. This is not saying that there are not others in the class, for, of course there are. But he is the only one I know personally and of whom I can write intimately.

First of all, he struck out for himself. For a man of his talents there were many opportunities, in that day, to attach to some great corporation, already established, and to become the head of a department, a cog in the machine. He chose to stand at the throttle himself.

Next, in the day of his affluence, he did not forget his home town and its dream. Its boom had collapsed. No one invested, because no one had anything with which to invest. The people were sorely tried to keep alive their hope of an eventual revival and their faith in the town's future. Young Mead came back with the prestige of prosperity, and bags of gold, and showed his faith by his works. His investments, for a period the only investments in the stricken city, heartened the whole community.

Lastly, his wealth did not change him. He remained its master. It did not master him. He kept it in its place, and wealth has its place.

The last time I talked with him about his success, many years ago, he gave little credit to his talents, and much credit to his luck. It wasn't true. But it was good.

## THE ALLY

Of course it would be impossible for me to write all that I want to write of Dave Leahy short of a volume. Under the circumstances I am compelled, on this occasion, to confine myself to a single detail of one of his many characteristics, with all of them clamoring to me to be set down.

This detail has to do with his newspaper side, and as I must use the more or less cryptic language of a newspaper office in doing it, I despair, at the outset, of getting adequately my idea of him to the reader.

I had come home from Chicago, upon urgent invitation, to apply my energies to the improvement of the newspaper, with the addition of such modern methods as I had picked up in the larger city. My first attempted reform was typographical. It resulted in a most heart-rending situation and I know now, indeed I never doubted, that but for Dave Leahy, I would have been overborne.

Now Dave Leahy was born in Limerick, was a big, handsome Irish lad who believed in banshees, was afraid of lightning and nothing else in the world, with a beautiful brogue that rolled from his tongue like music, and with a mind that had a charming command of letters. He was apprenticed to a draper. There was nothing of the tradesman in him, so when he rebelled, he was given a fat wallet and permitted to come to America. He spent something like two thousand dollars in two weeks between New York and Philadelphia, immediately after landing. He then joined with a light heart and a lighter purse, a railroad construction camp in Dakota. This camp was attacked by Indians, and after taking part in their repulse, he journeyed south



to Kansas. Eventually he landed in Wichita, bringing with him the startling sobriquet "Dynamite Dave," an appellation not of local origin and soon forgotten.

He was the city editor of the newspaper when I went to Chicago and he was city editor when I returned. His office was midway between the editorial sanctum and the composing room. The sanctum was more or less sacred territory, not to be lightly invaded. The city editor's room was at once an office, a vestibule, a general assembly hall, and upon occasion, a bedroom for the homeless and penniless printer. The city editor's room resembled an office most about nine o'clock at night. Dave Leahy and the reporters would appear about that hour, inform themselves as to the space they were expected to fill and then proceed to fill it. This operation was enlivened by the irregular apparition of a small, sinister youth, "the devil" from the room in the rear who shrieked in a most malevolent manner the single word "Copy," thus encouraging, in his humble way, the speedy production of classic literature.

His place of retreat before the fusillade of growls and angry glances leveled at him, was the composing room. At one side of this was a board cage with little windows in it. In the cage sat John Dines, the telegraph editor, who doled out the copy by dividing it into "takes," and hanging it on hooks in the little windows. In rows about the room stood the type-cases and other paraphernalia of a print shop, over which an alert spirit, Ajax Johnson, foreman, presided.

The devil delivered his capture of copy to Dines, who tried to keep the hooks supplied. When a printer shuffled up after a "take" and found none, he tried his best to wear away what little of nervous force Dines had left by yelling accusingly: "Clear Hook." I have

seen most of the great actors of this time. None of them could summon the profound look of silent contempt that John Dines could level at a printer at such a moment. I have seen strange printers actually shrink under it. Dines kept near him a brass column rule, and when a strange printer attempted by sleight-of-hand to avoid the top "take" because it was "lean" and appropriate a second "take" because it was "fat," Dines would crack him over the knuckles with that brass rule. This occasionally led to near-riots. But they didn't disturb Dines. He was the most imperturbable man I have ever known—and truth to tell, mentally, one man out of ten thousand.

This was the scenic investiture into which I brought my ideas of typographical reform. First, I suggested to the business management that it would be a good idea to banish all advertisements from the first page. I was shown that this would be disastrous. The town was floundering in heavy seas. There was no sense in boring holes through the bottom of the craft through discouraging business by driving advertisers away, and that was what my proposal meant, I was told. This was a skirmish in which the editorial forces, including John Dines, stayed with me, but I lost the composing room. The skirmish was won, however, and our forces moved up. Next, I lost John Dines. For years he had used only three top heads, the single words "State," "Territorial," and "National." I suggested that he write current and specific top heads on all dispatches and break up the old set of classifications. He refused and appealed to the editor, and there was good fighting all along the line. Dave Leahy was fighting with me, and I felt sure of him, but I knew we would show heavy losses. It was finally decided that the old set heads should go. To the surprise and pain of all of us, John Dines resigned. I had won that

battle, but we were in sorry shape. A valued worker had left the paper. I had lost not only his help, but his services. I felt also that the editorial forces were badly shaken. The editor was throwing up little defenses of his own in our midst and the reporters were getting uneasy. I am afraid that if a majority vote could have sent me back to Chicago at that moment, I would have been deported by the first train.

I suggested to Dave Leahy that there was only one correct way to write a top head for a local news story—that was by putting a verb of action in the top line, and using a given number of letters and spaces, and never less than three words. This sounds technical and it is, and at first it is a formidable formula, but with practice it is not difficult. When they heard the plan, the scribes in the city editor's office uttered a long and rebellious wail. When they tried to write those heads, they went off into variegated fits of nervous prostration.

Dave Leahy came to me. We had long been intimate. We had a remarkable harmony of view of men, motives and things, and first and last together we put a goodly proportion of all three under our common microscope. We had no secrets from each other. Now Dave Leahy said in substance that those new top heads had the boys crazy. He wasn't feeling quite balanced himself after wrestling with one, but if I meant to fight it out, he was with me to the death.

I told him I intended to go through. Then I told him a secret. "I am after those top-column eagles," I said.

"Don't do it!" he cried. "You've done enough. Don't do it!"

Now the top-column eagles were small copper-plate cuts of an eagle with spreading wings. One was placed at the top of the first column of every inside page.

Once they might have been useful in a decorative way. They did not seem even decorative now.

"I am going to get them," I said. "Are you with me?"

"I'm with you," said Dave Leahy.

I walked in on the editor and told him that I had but one other radical change to make. I didn't mention top-column eagles, but he knew.

"Young man," he said, "I founded this paper, and I put those eagles there. They are as much a part of this newspaper as its name. They are as much a part of me as my hands. Taking them out of this newspaper is like cutting off my hands."

There was no answer to an argument like that. But he hadn't forbidden me.

I left the editor in silence. Dave Leahy was waiting for me anxiously outside, a question in his eyes. "We'll leave the eagles out," I said.

"All right," Dave Leahy said, as he has said in scores of situations we have met in life together. "I'm with you."

That night back to back, facing an unbroken circle of condemnation, Dave Leahy and I, as allies, prayed to high heaven for protection and left those eagles out.

## THE RAINMAKER

Following the fashion of families who are disposed to let a robust boy shift for himself and to mother his weakly brother to the last degree of worriment, the people of my part of Kansas, when I was young, rather took a wheat yield for granted, while they annually wrung their hands over the perils of the corn crop.

There were two general reasons for this attitude. The first was that year in and year out wheat appeared more certain of stable returns than corn. The second reason was that wheat feigned illness from autumn to spring so often that the family grew rather callous to its chronic complaints and refused the solace of anxiety, while corn, if it grew sick at all, stepped at once to the precipice of fatality, and was saved only by the restraining hand of Providence.

That is to say wheat which might plead a dry fall, or, a little later, a dry-freeze, usually came splurging into the spring with a scare about the Hessian fly, or a green-bug, or too rank growth, or rust or blight, so that when it set up a claim about its troubles with moisture in filling its head, at the end, the family yawned and talked lazily about waiting for the thresher's record.

It wasn't that way with corn. Corn didn't complain at all. It might have a rash in the way of weeds in its babyhood, but that as a rule was soon cleared up, and usually it marched down through May and June, the picture of health, a happy herald of halcyon days to come. Thence forward it needed only one tonic—rain in fairly regular doses. It didn't always get the tonic and when it did not its peril was no pretension. There were no fortuitous revivals without rain and no false alarms as in the case of wheat. True, the corn in the bottoms, with the assistance of ground moisture

and scattering showers, would come through, but the bumper crop, which everybody always expected and which drafted the high plains acreage sloping upward to the Rockies in the west, a vast domain, demanded rain. If it didn't get rain, the front shades were down and crepe hung from the door handle so far as a maximum crop was concerned.

July and August, as the critical days for corn in that part of Kansas between Wichita and the mountains, early established themselves as a season wholly unlike the smiling summer sung by poets of other climes—a season of anxiety, of silent invocations to the skies, of effervescent expectations and lingering hopes, ending sometimes with abundance, sometimes with dearth.

The skies cast the dice, and if there are men among us who can meet equally disaster without repining and triumph without rejoicing, it is because they attend the hard school taught by Chance, where one of the lessons had to do with corn and rain.

Time and again in this part of the world certain people had approached the matter as a problem. On occasion certain neighborhoods prayed for rain. Certain old settlers, who kept up intimate personal relations with the weather, held to a demonstrable change in climate, emphasizing either an annual increase in normal moisture or a more equitable precipitation of the usual supply.

George Matthews met the problem in his own way. He decided to make it rain.

The idea wasn't new. But George Matthew's application of the idea was new. Everybody in town knew that time out of mind the Indians had been commanding the clouds to save their scant crops. The Medicine Man's approach to the clouds was not with a prayer: it was an order. This order was usually reinforced by inserting a few pebbles in a gourd and rattling it peremptorily in the face of high heaven. The

Medicine Man, moreover, was a mountebank and knew it.

George Matthews was not a mountebank. He believed he had found a practical method of compelling saturation and precipitation. If he fooled anybody, it was himself.

He was a prosperous merchant, a good citizen, a staunch friend. He struggled through the emotional heights and depths of several summers at the bedside of the corncrip, and, along with thousands of others, in self-protection he began to study storms.

He evolved a scientific theory. It was based on the belief that precipitation begins in the clouds at a single small point of saturation, from which it spreads. He believed he could create this small point artificially, by a discharge of gas into the air under certain conditions as indicated by the thermometer and barometer and by the cloud formations.

Matthews contended that if rain could be started, it would continue of itself. He spoke of "creating a center." He was encouraged in the theory by the fact that the Kansas sky in July and August frequently became overcast, with every indication of rain, but with no rain resulting. Matthews proposed to help the clouds over this narrow but deep chasm from which they so often backed away.

As soon as his theory became known, the scientists over the nation abolished it with gleeful unanimity. Wichita also refused to accord it a respectful hearing. This attitude aroused the fighting blood of Matthews and waving aside the doubters and scoffers, he began operations.

He was not to get far with them. If it rained during his experimentations, the community said it would have rained anyway. If it didn't rain, the citizens declared that they knew from the start that it was all nonsense.

Eventually, by its attitude, the community compelled

Matthews to abandon the whole thing. His neighbors and friends pointed out to him that a lot of charlatans over the country had borrowed his idea and were making it ridiculous. So he dropped his experimentations. He didn't drop his belief. One day he came to my room in the newspaper office, and opened up the whole subject to me. I told him I didn't believe in it, but he said he wanted to convince me.

There had been a long dry spell. The corn was curling. Those gluttons for moisture, the sun and the sirocco, had rudely pushed it away from the dipper. It didn't look like rain. It hadn't looked like rain for weeks. Matthews proposed that he would furnish me a jar, some iron-filings and a big bottle of acid, and, on a tin-roof just outside my office window, I should try his theory out myself. I was to add an ounce of liquid every two hours. At the end of thirty-six hours the rain would come. There was only one condition—the trial must be kept absolutely secret. He had promised his friends and his neighbors to drop the thing and no one must know. He had given his word and he must keep it.

I undertook the task. I had to have help and I enlisted the janitor. More or less surreptitiously we kept adding the acid. Every few hours Matthews, who couldn't keep away, visited the place, smilingly confident.

Dave Leahy, the city editor, must have seen him, and drawn the secret from the janitor. I did not tell Leahy.

Within twenty-four hours the sky was overcast, thunder rolled and lightning flashed through the night.

When the next morning paper appeared, I found that Leahy had written up the story of the futile storm and headed the article in flaring letters: "George Matthews at it Again."

But it did not rain.



## THE CAR DISPATCHER

POSSIBLY Ernest was Saxon. But whether he was Saxon, or Bavarian or Thuringian, he had had in his youth undoubtedly a rigorous military training. His bearing was that of a sergeant—a sergeant who breathes, drinks, eats and lives the element of disciplined order until it is part of every thought he has and every motion he makes.

Until you accept that fact you cannot see Ernest as I saw him. For until you see him as the product of disciplined order, you can not properly get the background against which I saw him—a background of disorder.

Ernest was the dispatcher of the street cars at the corner of Main street and Douglas avenue, in Wichita's days of disaster. For just as in the hour of general prosperity Wichita had plunged to dizzy heights than the other cities, so in the hour of general adversity, Wichita dropped back into darker and desperate depths.

Now those who remained in Wichita did not despair. They remained happy and hopeful through the storm. And more. Hard times soften people, just as soft times harden them. Those who fought shoulder to shoulder through the hard times developed a fraternal consideration for one another, a tenderness for one another's tribulations, and enthusiasm for one another's joys, quite wonderful to behold. Selfishness, indifference and envy are great weeds that grow apace while the sun is shining and loving kindness is a small herb with grace that flourishes in foul weather. Among other things, people are apt to forget to laugh in good times, while, I am sure, many would never survive hard times without humor.

Take Ernest, the starter-sergeant at the corner, and the citizens who conversed with him in that day. How they enjoyed it all and how careful they were not to let Ernest know it. For they knew him as a symbol of a brighter day that was lost, and a better day to come.

In all the catalogue of local catastrophies, the most complete collapse was the street car system. As the hard times, which had first scourged the countryside, crept in upon and tightened down over the stricken town, all paraphernalia which prosperity had propped up in haste began to disintegrate. The wooden sidewalks went first, crippling a great many pedestrians in the early stages of their decline. An early and experimental pavement crumbled in dusty decay. Houses in outlying sections emptied and hundreds of residences close in were occupied rentfree to "keep the insurance alive."

If the world had not aggravated Wichita's travail by its own general collapse, the town would have recovered quickly, for it was fighting courageously to encompass its dream. I have always believed that it was this struggle, during the dark days, which eventually made the dream of a future city come true. Time and again, the citizens who no longer had money to give, put their property in community pools to induce new enterprises to locate, and to set the city on its onward march again.

The contraction of values and dissipation of credits which seemingly originated in the Argentine, swept from London, around the globe and struck Wichita, already weakened, like a tornado. The banks here found themselves struggling with a panic hand to hand. Values vanished in a night and hypothecations were shadows piled on shadows. The little coin and currency in the community flowed in a relentlessly outward current across the teller's counter. It was a paltering

phantom thing—the panic—which the bankers could not grapple—insubstantial to assault, crushing in its ponderous impact as it slowly closed in upon its victims.

During those days one of the bankers, A. W. Oliver, an upstanding citizen, keen of mind, of tender heart, used to come into my office and write editorial paragraphs for an hour or so, hand me the contribution and go out without a word. Usually I did not speak to him. I knew he was struggling for relaxation and conversation couldn't help. His bank, which had done so much to build up the southwest, went under. Time proved that it was as sound as a dollar. It had the assets; it didn't have the dollars.

One day I called upon another banker on a matter of news. This was L. D. Skinner. I asked him how things were going. He dragged me into the vault and drew the doors shut after us. "Out there over that counter," he said, with a white, pain-drawn face, "they are drawing my heart's blood out drop by drop, hour after hour. It is a cruel thing, a cruel thing."

So far as I could observe no one blamed the bankers and the bankers blamed no one. The community always seemed to understand that in borrowing and lending credit, man proposes, but in fixing cash pay-day, God, alone the guardian of faith, disposes.

The final crash came. The town reeled under the blow. Failure followed failure. There was misery, and tragedy, of course, misery and tragedy in plenty, but it kept within doors. Out of doors on the streets men drew together and talked of other things, or if they permitted themselves to touch upon the subject uppermost in the minds of all of them, speculated hopefully that "times would be better in the spring."

Still there was happiness and humor even in those days. I remember Harry Piper, a young bill collector.

He was a jovial soul notwithstanding that on some days his total collections aggregated less than a dollar and he was paid on commission. One night he dropped in on us to impart good news. On the iron threshold of one of the office buildings that day he had come across a ten dollar bill—ownerless.

"Did you get it?" I asked.

"Get it," he said. "Come up there and I'll show you where my fingers hit the iron."

Better days were to come. Better days did come. But before the Peerless Princess of the Plains emerged from her Cinderella woes, and came into her own again, there were many trials to face.

Among those many trials, none was greater than the street car system. It wasted away, dropping from one deplorable level of dilapidation to another. The tracks became a crazy succession of low joints and high centers, the cars noisy horse-fiddles on flat-wheels. Trolley-wheels would not track, and armatures were atrophied. There once had been a schedule. It disappeared as a reality. It persisted as a legend.

Some one put Ernest, the dispatcher, in charge of that legendary timetable. Ernest, the sergeant, a flesh and blood embodiment of order, punctuality, and physical co-ordination.

In his struggle to apply the control of an ordered mind to a disordered mechanism, he added to his equipment a telescope. This he would level on a distant car and report to the bystanders on the degree of its disability—turning now east, now south, now north, now west, and reporting impartially, and without humor, good and evil.

He was a tall, handsome blonde soldier, was Ernest, respected by the citizens who did much chuckling over the telescope among themselves, but never before him.

I can see him now, at the corner, wiping the eye-piece

and focusing the tapering instrument on a bouncing yellow blister on the eastern horizon.

"She's passed Hillside Avenue," he is reporting soberly, "and coming good."

Ernest, the starter-sergeant of the street cars, Ernest, memory of a bright yesterday, hope of a better to-morrow, symbol of the habit of order in a weltering world.

## A TRADER

ONLY by considering the livery stable biologically may you see Harry Hill as I saw him. That is to say, the livery stable as an institution must be followed through the grub stage to the chrysalis if one is to see it become the butterfly it did become in Harry Hill's career.

I have always felt that the evolution took place in spite of Hill himself. He was a substantial citizen, much esteemed, a man of sound financial judgment, and normally disposed to disdain any dramatic dressing of the day's work. Indeed you will not see him at all, as I saw him, if you do not picture him, throughout, as a man of business who kept books, studied markets and never let enthusiasm over a trade confuse his judgment of values.

He came into prominence during the boom as a shrewd trader and when the boom passed, he found himself the owner of a horse and mule market which itself was a development from the more primitive livery stable.

That brings us to a consideration of the livery stable. In the East long ago the livery stable was an adjunct of the tavern. When the West began, the livery stable had pulled away from the tavern and had asserted itself. It was the end of the stage route, and privy to the management thereof. Among competing hotels the stage-driver could play favorites and did. Swelling with the importance of its new estate, the livery stable in the West revolted against its position in society. It deserted the back yard and audaciously toed up on the main street. Being still a barn, however, and still looking a barn, it essayed a bold disguise. This was a high rectangular front which con-

cealed the gabled roof and gave it architectural right to keep company with the stores along the street. In this position it was never popular. It had social limitations in the way of odors, flies and night-noises. But it held its own for years against an economic chapter of crushing disasters.

Its first blow was sustained when the railroad came and the station succeeded it as a terminal. The stage coach vanished, but in a gallant effort to maintain prestige the livery stable installed an omnibus, with plush cushions and a show of art, in pastoral scenes, on its sides. In time the omnibus, stricken with street car competition, followed the stage coach and the "hack" took its place. As the town increased in population these "hacks" multiplied, and so did the livery stables. As they grew in number, they established gradations, reaching from the feed stables where the farmers tied their teams for the afternoon to the horse and mule market, which was not so much a stable, as it was a lively and important exchange for wholesale transactions in horse flesh.

Most of those in the business in that day were citizens who took a lively part in public affairs, were enthusiastic town-builders and men of affairs. Many of them passed away before the livery stable began its decline. Possibly few of them dreamed that a decline was possible.

The decline set in with the advent of hard times, following the collapse of the first boom. The great financial storm which swept across the West, caught in the swirl of its devastating broom many things, stationery and locomotive, and among them, the minor circuses. One morning there blew into Wichita, with the tumbleweeds before a high wind, a collapsed circus, its boss, its canvasmen, its equestrians, its tumblers, clowns and freaks, a good many of them hungry, a good many of them penniless, and all of them homeless. A single fare

to New York in those days reached fifty dollars. After one look across that impassable gulf, the majority of the circus people settled down to wait a better day of escape.

These people filled the town with circus lore. They painted glowing verbal pictures of the fortunes men had made with circuses, and would make again. Of course their torrential romance reached the livery stable—for there was a tie that bound circus and livery stable—a tie of horse, harness and hay—and the circus in truth was the brilliant butterfly of the stable grub.

Harry Hill listened to the story. He must have weighed it carefully, shrewd trader that he was. He must have stripped it of its imaginative embellishments. There was one thing certain—the livery stable as an institution was declining and with it the horse and mule market. There was money in a moneyless time, in the circus business—a certain kind of circus business. Cody, with his wild west show, was making money. There was every indication that so long as the rest of the world persisted in dramatizing the cowboy, the Indian and the six-shooter, the flavor of the West, not as it was but as the East insisted it should be, was a marketable commodity. Hill did not trust wholly to his own judgment about it. He consulted with a friend—a prosperous merchant—Joe Rich. Rich encouraged him and joined in the enterprise.

I am certain that both Hill and Rich were not careless in calculation. Rich could not see it in any other than the business light and Hill would not. How far Hill knew that the livery business was in a fatal declension is a matter of conjecture. He was shrewd enough to suspect it. But he could hardly foresee the ravening army of gasoline motors, in the ambush of the future, waiting to charge with a hundred thousand rubber-tired chariot-wheels against the horse, vested with



four thousand years of human habit and history, and to destroy him. Within a decade the engines were indeed purring in attack; within two decades the livery stable, which had surrendered its stage coach to the locomotive, its omnibus to the street-car, had struck colors over its dilapidated hack to the new enemy of cogs and cams. It dwindled and decayed in the shadow of its noisy neighbor—the garage, and in Wichita, went out at last in flaming defiance of a ferocious fate—the majority burning to the ground in quick and sensational succession.

All this Harry Hill hardly could have foreseen. He may have suspected something of the kind. He was not to witness it. But he did see the business, before he died, burst into a butterfly.

He gathered together here those who had been long strangers to these streets—all the material of a wild west show—the booted and spurred cowboy, the crack marksman, the blanketed and feathered Indian, the congeries of men, women, guns and animals which the sophisticated East believed the simple West to be. It was a typical wild west show—in some respects superior. Hill's business instincts, let it be recorded, refused certain concessions to the show game. He kept his hair short and dressed as a citizen. He invented no romantic past for himself. Of course he rejoiced in the pageant he set up, the gay and gala spectacle of moving color, the authentic thrill of unauthentic tournament—but it was the gratification of a showman with entertainment to sell.

The Harry Hill wild west show moved into the East. It prospered. But somewhere in the Ohio Valley it was ripped up and beaten down by a tornado. In a few days Hill had it on its feet again and going. But a railroad wreck immediately after smashed it once more and laid it low. It did not survive. It had been born a butterfly and a butterfly it died.

## A CATTLE BARON

NO PICTURE of Wichita in the third decade of its history would be complete if it did not include the cattlemen, and a cattleman of a new kind.

For the old order had changed. The original type displayed certain outstanding attributes—first among them, unusual commercial ambition and, correspondingly, an unusual disdain of hazard, second, an indifference to economic principles which was the result in part of innocence and in part of sheer wilfulness, and third, a hunger for personal adventure.

So it happened that the earlier cattlemen who frequented Wichita were as booted and spurred as their cowboys. They came to town a-horseback over the Chisholm trail, behind grinding, bellowing herds which had been for weeks on the way, from unlimited ranges, across unlimited ranges, to the railroad's end. The original enterprise usually had borrowed money behind it, the development of the herd, such as it was, enjoyed a virtual gratuity, on the score of grazing, and the market realization was a fortuity, and no more responsive to any known law than the wind or the rain.

The early cattleman's contribution to the business, consequently, was an assumption of the debt, personal supervision of the delivery of the herd to the market and after sale summary subtraction of the bank's money from cash in hand. As a rule it was a big transaction. It involved no intricate accountancy. The profit was no insubstantial entry on a ruled page. It was coin—coin won in the teeth of hazard and to be spent in further defiance of the jade.

After the books had been closed, the balance struck, the early cattlemen were given to faro. Here hazard

was entrenched behind a deck of cards and here they attacked her. She was the same old hazard they had met on the range and on the trail—but with a difference. There she rode the blizzard and sirocco, driving the shivering cattle into the shallow draws in winter, scattering them starving far over the sun-scorched plains in summer. There she crept among the kine and touched them with deadly fevers. There she glared from thunder-clouds and filled their silly heads with panic and stampeded them. But here, under a brilliant light in a warm room, she met her enemies softly, gently, in a jack, a queen, a ten-spot. But hazard is not all there is to adventure, and the early cattleman, after a little time, would yawn, shove back his chair, cash in, stalk on his high heels to his hotel, gather in his gang and start back, the next morning, to the open range where a man could fill his lungs to their full and meet fickle fortune face to face, on horse-back, and never think of yawning.

When the railroad built beyond Wichita these cattlemen disappeared. They may have followed the terminus. But I suspect that they entirely vanished. For their old range was vanishing before the influx of population. The farm and its fence were driving it farther and farther west and southwest. The range made a stand, for a spell, on the Indian lands in Oklahoma, but these too succumbed to agricultural subdivision.

Then came the ranch—far west and southwest. Then came too a new kind of cattleman to Wichita. He didn't wear high heels. He didn't play faro. He had all the commercial ambition of the earlier type—for he was given to high emprise and was called a "cattle baron." He didn't disdain hazard, indeed he might fret over her treachery. He was not indifferent to economic principles for he improved breeds, feeding,

studied markets and rates of interest and kept books. He was, moreover, not given to flirting with adventure. One thing he had in common with his predecessor—he loved the open air and the open country.

He built a big house in Wichita and occupied it a portion of the year with his family. You would find him frequently in the back room of the bank, a well-dressed, well-shod business man. Then he would disappear for a period and you would know that he had gone to the ranch and, if he had persuaded the family to follow for a season, that he was supremely happy.

His big house in town was frequently a social center, and as the years wore on the family followed him less frequently to the ranch.

One of these later cattle barons in Wichita was "Barbecue" Campbell. He was so nicknamed in the cattle country because this was or had been his brand—a bar, and the letter Q, which was twisted into the trisyllable. In Wichita he was B. H. Campbell. His family was a most interesting one; his wife one of the most charming women I have ever known.

Now just where B. H. Campbell discovered that I was a convenient repository for philosophical conclusion, I can not say. It must have been in my rounds as a reporter. I wanted to know, as a reporter, about the state of the cattle business. I found instead reflections on the riddle of the universe.

Possibly at first he dropped a reflection accidentally and finding me interested, went on in the hope that, young though I was, I might help him, which of course I could not. His study of the physical world about him had brought him to the age-old question—why life, why death?

He loved the open air. He loved the open country. He loved the silence of the plains, the solitude which the unbroken horizon rings around and the cloudless

sky roofs over. He loved the shifting phantom half-lights on distant prairies glimmering, glooming under a wan and westering moon, and the pulsing pallor of a timid prairie dawn. Over it all there brooded for him the old, eternal, weary question—why—why life, why death?

He was not always in the mood in which I first had extended conversation with him. Sometimes he dropped into lively reminiscent strain. I remember this story. He had started across country alone with a strange stage-driver for an all day drive. Ten miles out, and no turning back, he discovered that he had set out with a single cigar. He was a heavy smoker and this was a dreary prospect. He suddenly be-thought him that he should pay tribute to politeness and unselfishness and offer the cigar to the stage driver. He did, weakly hoping as he confessed to me, that the driver would decline. But the driver did not refuse it. He asked Mr. Campbell for a match, lighted the cigar, puffed it a few times and then examining it critically, said:

“Mr. Campbell, I’ve broken a resolution. That is the first cigar I’ve smoked in fifteen years.”

One day we in Wichita heard that Mr. Campbell’s boy Charles, a comely, loveable youth, had been killed on the eve of his wedding day in an accident on the ranch. A few weeks later the father came to see me. He pulled up his chair and sat quite close to me. He told me he had suffered until he could stand it no longer, and one day, alone on the prairie, he halted his horse, and looking up into the blue sky had called twice from the depths of his soul: “Charley, Charley.”

“He did not answer,” he said, and dropped his head upon his chest.

## THE SALESMAN

CURIOUSLY whenever in my youth I sat and heard great argument on economics and philosophy, I thought of Bliss at the silk counter. Bliss was always at the silk counter. Once or twice he changed stores, but when he did he left one silk counter and went straight-way to another silk counter.

Stores started, flourished and failed. Men became clerks, then managers, then proprietors through the years, and sometimes proprietors became managers and then clerks, but Bliss stayed at the silk counter. All around him men gained wealth and lost it, won prestige and lost it, established estate and lost it while Bliss held to the silk counter. Within his vision men were always clambering upward to the pride of success and floundering down to the humiliation of failure, while Bliss continued to live comfortably and securely on his ledge.

Not only that. Good times succeeded hard times, and hard times succeeded good times and, in the distracting circle, the community in turn reveled in wealth and struggled in poverty. In the day of its plenary purchasing power, no price was too high for the community, and in the day of flat purses no price was low enough—except the price of silk. For (let all economists ponder this), a western community, with unimpaired inspirations of democracy, shields itself against adversity in silk. Of course this is against all theories of economists, but in refutation of all theories and all spectacled and sagacious theorists, I offer Bliss and his silk counter.

Take Bliss himself. As a youth I was chiefly concerned in the problem of individual contentment. To

me Bliss seemed to have more nearly solved it than most men I knew. Either by accident or design he selected an activity which was least susceptible to the violences of the market and most enduring against the slings and arrows of outrageous fashion. He had a choice of several things in the beginning without question. He might have taken up with foods. Purveyance of food always attracts an inexperienced salesman. It is so conclusive a postulate that people must eat. But Bliss passed up food. He might have taken up with brick or lumber as a salesman. Man must have a roof over his head. But Bliss passed up building material. He might have taken up with any one of a number of alluring sub-divisions of the region of raiment. For man, in good times and bad, must get a shirt on his back. Now by some subtle philosophical insight into the ways of humanity, Bliss ran the eye of his fancy over the list of fabric necessities—the cottons, woollens, linens and leathers which have evolved from the fig leaf—until he came to silk—the one inimitable luxury which humanity does not need, and cannot do without. Therefore Bliss chose that which has indubitable certainty of demand.

That decision was the first milepost on the highway to individual contentment. The next was to learn to love his ware—the fundamental basis of expert merchandising. I do not know how it is now, but in former days the silk counter was always at the front of the store, where the light was strong. Here Bliss was stationed behind the counter with his diminutive scissors, and in front of towering shelves of long, flat bolts of imprisoned rainbows. Tens of thousands of women visited Bliss here and watched him manipulate his treasures. Always briskly and unerringly, his hand shot to the very bolt and captured it. Always quickly and with an eager expectation of delight, he unrolled the

bolt. Always tenderly and with single-minded affection he caught up the soft, sheer, shining fabric and let the lights and shadows play through the hills and hollows of its drapery. The customer was more spectator than patron—for here was, not a sale, but a rite, a devotee doing homage at a shrine. He loved his silks because he knew them. He was a wizard in knowledge of quality and color. He catalogued in his mind every remnant in his stock. He knew precisely every color in the silk spectrum, whether he had it or not, and if he had it, where he could instantly reach it. No practice ever achieves an accomplishment like that; only affection can. For many a day in our town "Bliss can match it" was a shopper's axiom.

During the years, an endlessly flowing stream of shimmering color passed through his caressing fingers out to the tumbling sea of happiness, sorrow, ambition, vanity, rivalry, envy and pride—out to the brides, to the widows, to the socially aspiring and the socially arrived. But salesman that he was, Bliss never parted with a length of silk without the feeling that he was parting with a friend.

In my rounds as a newspaper reporter, and as a youth having Bliss under philosophical observation, I came to know through him that barter at its best is an art. If it were the mere exchange of commodity for coin this would be a weary world indeed. When there is added to exchange the element of service, good will travels in across the counter with the money, and service travels out across the counter with the goods. I never saw Bliss force too eagerly his fabrics out or welcome too warmly his currency in. His emphasis lay upon the commodity he was losing, not upon the coin he was gaining. He did not subscribe to the trade fallacy that "the customer is always right," for he knew that a cocksure customer cannot remain a satisfied customer if she later discovers she was permitted to be



wrong. Besides, Bliss did not propose to consign his beloved silk to the fate of inharmonious combinations. He advised, not only when requested, but when the occasion warranted he volunteered advice. All this was part of his love of his wares, the first attribute, as I have said, of expert salesmanship.

That was the second mile-stone on his highway. He chose a line of stable demand, sustained through fair weather and foul by a population that surrendered its luxuries last. He loved his wares. There is a third mile in this journey. It is constancy. Change com-leaf—until he came to silk—the one inimitable luxury which humanity does not need, and can not do without. of responsibility. If it does not, it brings with the humiliation of failure, the goad of vain regret. Most men flirt with Change. Some men take her to wife. There are more mourners in that household, believe me, than rejoicers.

Bliss stayed on the job. He chose the art of merchandising in satin, taffeta, foulard, charmeuse, crepe de chine, not at the loom or in the warehouse, but where these fabric phantoms meet at last the brightening, covetous eye of warm Beauty, and the imperious, appraising estimate of cold Pride. On that spot he halted and prospered—prospered in contentment. Who can do more?

I can see him now, a well-clad figure, with a round, placid face, a head quite bald, making his way home in the evening. I can see him at the organ in the church, Sunday, his affection, truant from his silks for the day, centered in the music.

Here, as at the silk counter, and on the street, it seemed to me, was a man who could tell the best of your economists and philosophers a thing or two. For here was, in flesh and blood, mind and spirit, a man who kept company with luxury all his life and remained throughout unimpeachably content.

## AN ARMY OFFICER

AN OCCASIONAL visitor to my room in the newspaper office was Captain Woodson, United States Army. He was very straight, punctilious, and maintained with me a rigid formality, unrelieved by the slightest sense of humor.

When Woodson first made himself known to me he was Captain. Not easily accommodating myself to differences in military rank, and having fixed him in my mind as a captain it remained for me to regard him as a captain long after he had ceased to be one.

After I had greeted him as Captain Woodson he would protest in the most solemn manner: "Major, if you please" or at a later period: "Colonel, if you don't mind." Eventually he became a General, but at the time I knew him best Captain Woodson was a Major.

It was at this period that someone in authority in Washington, despairing of civilian Indian agents in Oklahoma territory, had decided to install officers of the regular army as guardians of the blanket aborigines. Captain Woodson was so installed at Darlington, an outpost, in charge of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Here was located an Indian school and here Captain Woodson lived. The Indians themselves wandered helplessly and hopelessly around over the extensive reservation, visiting their children in school occasionally and laying their numerous complaints, in the complaining Indian way, before the Captain.

Now Captain Woodson had his own ideas about Indians. They were not sentimental ideas. He conceded ungrudgingly that Indians were human beings, but he insisted that they were Indians. To him the dif-

ference between a white man and an Indian was not a difference in degree, it was a difference in kind. Therefore, any attempt to make an Indian something other than an Indian greatly offended Captain Woodson's sense of the fitness of things.

All this I gathered during his visits to me. At this time, the government was attempting to beguile the Cheyennes and Arapahoes with the gentle art of agriculture. It is an art that involves labor and the Cheyennes and Arapahoes flunked. This neither surprised nor pained the Captain. I think he rather approved the Indians' flunking. It established their racial title to him.

Not raising enough to feed themselves, it became necessary for the government to feed them, and funds having been supplied, provision was made for periodical issues of beef to them. Captain Woodson might have set up a butcher's block and doled out the meat in the usual way. He did nothing of the sort. He brought the cattle in on the hoof, turned the steers loose on the prairie in bunches, and let the Indians hunt them. He was trying to accommodate himself to the ways of the Indian. The Indian approved, but a number of his white friends concerned as to his progress, did not. Complaint was made to Washington and Captain Woodson was compelled, with sorrow, to conduct a meat market.

"Does it work all right—the meat market, Captain?" I asked.

"Major, if you please," he answered solemnly. "It works all right, but it's tommy-rot balderdash."

One day my mother and my wife, who had been traveling about in the territory, arrived in Wichita aflame with righteous indignation and when they told me they had visited Darlington, I guessed that the beef issue on the hoof had been resumed.

That was not, however, their provocation. They had visited the Indian school, and the superintendent, a man named Montgomery, had pointed out to them a comely Indian maiden and had told them, with a sigh, that the maiden's father had proposed to sell her into marriage to a very old Indian for sixteen ponies.

"Do you call this a free, civilized country?" my mother demanded of me.

I asserted that I believed it was.

"Then," she said, "you will stop this thing."

I called in David Leahy, my fellow craftsman. He wanted particulars, but all we could obtain was the Christian name of the maiden—Rosa.

David Leahy added fancifully Whiteface as a surname and wired the facts, as we had them, to a New York paper and asked if it would undertake to stop this mercenary marriage. The New York newspaper wired back that it would undertake it, indeed showed an unholy self-advertising zeal about it. It wanted more facts. David Leahy gathered these in the territory, confirmed the story that Rosa had been betrothed to an aged Indian and that her father was to receive sixteen ponies from the bridegroom.

When the New York newspaper had armed itself with these facts, it went to the charge for the defense of civilization with all the indignation my mother and my wife had felt, plus a towering conviction that it alone was holding the fort against the assault of a viciously reviving barbarism. It spread this conviction over its first page. It called on Washington to act. Washington acted. The White House was perturbed. The Interior Department was aroused. The Indian Bureau was outraged. This occurred in a single day, and while Washington acted, the New York newspaper did not rest. It decided, the following day, to bring Rosa east and have her plead personally to the President to

save her from the clutches of this sordid old scoundrel. Now Washington did not propose that Rosa should do any personal pleading, and while it had already acted, it proceeded to act again in the most vigorous fashion. We did not know it, but Washington was telegraphically turning Captain Woodson gray.

Two days later he stalked into my room.

"This Rosa thing," he said, "Washington has gone crazy. The whole government is on my back."

"Captain," I said, "have you stopped the marriage?"

"Major, if you please," he said. "No, I haven't. It's tommy-rot—balderdash."

"I think if I were you I would stop the marriage," I advised.

"Why stop it?" he exclaimed with heat. "Rosa's all right; the Indian she is going to marry is all right. Why stop it?"

"Well, the groom is pretty old," I asserted with judicial sternness.

"He's old all right," said the Captain. "But that's nothing against him. He'll treat her a lot better than a lot of those young bucks would. It's tommy-rot—balderdash, I tell you."

"What about her father selling her for sixteen ponies?" I launched this at the Captain accusingly.

The Captain fixed me with his eye, flushed, paled and flushed again and then said, calmly enough:

"Look here. Indians are Indians. Custom is custom. When an Indian girl marries, the groom makes a present of ponies to the bride's father. Rosa's father will get the sixteen ponies all right. And why not?"

"You never could explain that to Washington, Captain," I said.

"Major, if you please," he said, and then added: "Probably not."

There was a long pause. At last he said resignedly: "All right. I'll wire now I've stopped the marriage. Tommy-rot—Balderdash."

He stalked out. The next day the New York newspaper announced that it had saved Rosa.

A week later, Montgomery, the superintendent, called on me. He was a tall, lanky, jovial soul in an impossibly long frock coat and an impossibly high silk hat.

"Major Woodson is still boiling," he reported, "And I'm transferred to Arizona—he spotted me as the author of that story. I was just trying to be entertaining that day and this is what I get for it! Arizona!"

I do not know what happened subsequently. But I did know Captain—Major—Woodson—and his belief about Indians—and I have always had a suspicion that while the bans were forbidden, the marriage took place and Rosa's father got the ponies.

## THE MILLINER

THROUGHOUT the years millinery remained to me the first social mystery. In my investigations as a newspaper man I went at last to Katie Wiggs. She had plumbed deep into the problem herself, but she had not solved it.

As I approach the mystery again, I see first the problem and then Katie Wiggs. In the day when I was given to this sort of thing, I considered a problem like this first historically, then anthropologically, then socially, and finally economically. On the first score it was plain enough to me that the Mediterranean which gave us almost everything, did not saddle millinery upon us. The Greeks and the Romans I found innocent. I suspected the Goths and the Franks. Under the second heading, the anthropological heading, it was similarly plain that the male made a gallant stand for the natural rights of his sex, and held for a while with the peacock, the rooster and the lion in capital decoration, but that the other side, as early as Cromwell's day, had not left him a feather. Under the third heading, the social heading, it was not difficult to see that the conquering monopolists in millinery—the women—had introduced a completely weird set of rules—based on fashion—which commanded not only seasonal changes, but such changes as conformed rigidly to a fixed form, born of nothing but a universal fancy, spontaneously, and without conspiracy or variation. If this sounds cryptic, it does so because it is cryptic. Under the fourth heading, the economic heading, the only thing that was demonstrable was that millinery followed no economic principle. By the time I had reached young manhood, the world was pretty well in-

dustrialized. Value in any tangible thing was believed to have its origin in intangible labor applied, under the law of supply and demand, to such substantial material in the way of capital as man could offer, and in the way of soil, sunshine and rain as nature provided. Now Labor's addition to a creation of ribbons and feathers was infinitesimal, and so indeed was Capital's contribution. The law of supply had nothing to do with it. Demand alone dictated the value, and Demand in the fairy form of Fashion's foibles at that.

Now all this invasion of so complex a thing by me grew out of the hard times which had descended upon us, as a green-black thunder cloud smothers the yellow prairie at twilight, and still hung above us like a pall. Dresses were made over and shoes were made to do, but at the imperious command of the seasons, the non-essential bonnet blossomed forth, new and above all different. Adversity might shine the fabric at the seams and gloss over the leather patch. It dared not touch the feather or the ribbon—one at a new angle, the other with a new twist.

Why this mysterious exemption of millinery against the lean hand that took its dole of larder, wardrobe, ambition, pride and hope? It was that which puzzled me. So I carried the problem to Katie Wiggs. Katie Wiggs was willing to help me. A tiny, timid woman she was, with bright, steady eyes, and behind them a burning artistic soul, afraid to show itself, and showing itself, shrinking back precipitately. A little while, a mere breath, as time is measured, the coming and going of a few springs and autumns, and her soul was to burn its earthly shell away and to pass from us on and out to the fleeting shadows which must be the eternal substance upon which such souls dwell.

She had small white hands, little, deft fingers, the thin lips of the seamstress, an appraising inclination



of the head—a gentle voice, seldom used. She was the head of a score or more of young women in a whole-sale millinery department, blonde girls, brunette girls, plump girls, slender girls, all vestals at this shrine of straw, lace, ribbon, beads, and feathers. Under Katie Wiggs' direction, each gave form to her dream, submitted it to her revision. A turn here, a twist there, a touch, a pat, a stroke, the thing was done, and set to seduce the Demand, aforesaid.

I did not carry the historical, anthropological or the economic features of my problem to Katie Wiggs. I presented alone its social aspects to her.

"What do they pay for?" I asked.

I remember she was quite abashed. She stroked a bit of velvet with her little fingers, and weighed her answer as one who would rather not reply.

At last she said, ever so softly: "Taste."

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Taste and something else," she said.

"And that something is what?" I asked.

"Fashion," she said, smiling.

"And what is fashion, Katie Wiggs?"

"I've thought and thought," she said, bringing her little hands together. "Fashion must be taste—and something else."

"And that something else is what?" I asked.

"Change," she said.

"So fashion is taste plus change," I said confidently.

"Taste plus change, plus something else," said Katie Wiggs.

"What?" I asked.

"Form," she said.

"We almost have it, Katie Wiggs," I said.

"Yes," she answered. "But not quite. They pay for taste—that is fashion and fashion is combination of color and form—a knowledge of harmonious shades

and harmonious lines—but that isn't all—they pay for change. It is that which they demand and we supply.”

In a world of barter and sale, of vendors and vendees, of staples and specialties, of necessities and luxuries, millinery remains to me the first mystery. It is a creation of color and form and change. Color and form have laws. To me change has no law. I suspect it had none to Katie Wiggs.

## THE CAMPAIGNER

Among striking political campaigns I have witnessed I put first Dennis Flynn's invasion of Greer county. Flynn was Oklahoma's delegate in Congress and re-nominated for election. Greer county was a geographical orphan. For many years this considerable domain had been part of Texas. It was settled by Texans under the Texas land laws, which were administered independently of the United States—the unit of entry being upward of a thousand acres.

The Supreme Court of the United States one day being invited to mess over the deed to Louisiana which Napoleon made, the terms of Santa Anna's surrender and goodness knows what other historical lumber behind the maps, discovered that Greer county was not in Texas at all. It was therefore attached to Oklahoma. A countyful of voters who had been taking part regularly in presidential elections, and in the selection of governors, congressmen and the like, found themselves summarily restricted to the single choice of a territorial delegate and associated with a population to which they were alien, and which, for lack of a better name, they called "radicals" meaning Republicans.

It was this detached electorate and attached citizenship which Dennis Flynn, candidate for delegate, invaded. Flynn frequently visited me in Wichita and I went with him in this novel canvass at his invitation.

Kester of Kingfisher, formerly a deputy marshal, and with enemies, drove the carryall, with a rifle beneath the seat and a pendent six-shooter below his left arm under his coat. Flynn and I occupied the rear seat. So we covered several hundred miles, making our

way across the newly-settled Cheyenne and Arapahoe country. Kester repeatedly added zest to the journey by cataloguing the settlements further up the trail where dwelt divers individuals who had sworn to "get him."

Years afterward they did get him. However, on this trip his anxiety simply made all distant approaching horsemen doubly interesting. No distance defeated Kester's telescopic eyesight and his analysis of all but invisible objects at times was weird. Once on a far-away hill ahead a bobbing spot, a man on horseback, suddenly divided. "Indian," said Kester with relief. "Dismounted on the wrong side."

Across the bleak prairies we wandered on, making the new straggling, struggling towns in the afternoons and pushing forward, after the meeting, at once, in order to make the next county seat the following day. At Watonga the opposition had spread the rumor of an Indian uprising to keep the crowd away. But the crowd was there, the Indians included. We camped at night on the prairie usually and slept to the dolorous lullaby of the calamitous coyotes. Occasionally we came to a sodhouse, built in against the bank of a draw, and paused to gossip with the settler. Once in the early morning we swung down into a ravine and found there a family of children, the eldest a boy, not over ten. The mother and father had been gone for a week to the county seat. The children were seated in the open, each armed with a big wooden spoon eating out of a common bowl a mixture of sorghum and tomatoes. These children were all prairie-born. An inquiry developed that they had never seen a fish, and we at once produced a can of sardines. They were curious, but, having tasted them, returned eagerly to their treacle. Again, lost on the prairie at night, we made for a distant light and came to an extensive house, occupied by

one, Tom Butler, once a rich railroad contractor, now a struggling homesteader. He had retained, oddly, much of the fine furniture of his better days, and when we dined with him there stood behind him a very aged, obsequious Englishman, his personal servant, who had followed him and his fortunes to the end.

Another night on the prairie I was engaged in broiling a prairie chicken over a chip-fire, an office which would be more satisfactory if the illumination were not all on the nether-side, when a stray horseman cantered up and after watching my efforts with a disapproving interest, remarked that he was a Texan and asked who we might be. I explained, and he was satisfied. He then confessed that he had suspected us of being "ring-necked woollies," apparently a cattleman's cynical idiom for farmers who affected linen collars.

As we journeyed westward the settlement grew more sparse, the towns smaller, the grass shorter, the sky more blue, more cloudless. For half a day we traveled in sight of the sandwraiths that writhed in the wind above the dry bed of the Canadian river, twirling, twisting, drifting, dipping, lifting, liting demons, ever waving their phantom arms, as in despair of their environment, ghosts of sunlight and silence and desolation.

As we passed out of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe country into Greer county, potable water became more difficult to obtain and when we arrived at Delhi we had one tincupful left. We had passed over a long, drear expanse of land, carpeted in shin oak, searching for our town. Flynn's committee had sent word to the postmaster at Delhi that he would speak there that afternoon. A school-house and a store, which we came upon at noon, seemed to be Delhi. No one was to be found in either. We drove on until we found another house. A quilting party was in progress. The women said that the postmaster had gone hunting, but that every-

body knew about the meeting and everybody would come.

We drove back to the school-house and camped in the shade of it. It was a blistering day, the sun cooking the short grass to a crisp and sapping life from man, beast and plant. At two o'clock the audience had arrived, in wagons and on horseback. The men occupied the seats on one side of the center aisle; the women those on the other. No one spoke to us.

At the appointed hour Dennis Flynn picked up his tincup of water and walked to the rostrum, placed the tincup at his feet, introduced himself, and began his speech. He was a remarkable campaigner, and this was a remarkable campaign. There were two men of his party in the county when he entered it, and at the election he divided the twelve hundred votes evenly with his opponent. I have seen no such achievement in a campaign before or since.

Dennis Flynn was young, daring, ingratiating, slender, handsome and eloquent. His speech was devoted to a clear, clean, informing exposition of the laws of the country, pertaining to land, lightened with intimate anecdotes. He was master of his subject, which was then a vital one to his auditors. Here as elsewhere in the county, he met rapt attention and eventually applause.

But today there was no applause. While the audience listened with interest it ignored those rising inflections and oratorical pauses which invite and accommodate demonstrative approval. Whether he had won them or not I could not tell.

He was drawing near his close and its reward—the cup of water at his feet—when a tousle-headed infant toddled forward, captured the cup and drained it.

I left then to help hitch the horses to the carryall and missed Flynn's peroration. A little later he came

out, dripping, jumped in and we made with all speed for a distant wind-mill, miles away. Thirst forbade speculation on the possible effect of the speech.

We had gone about a mile when I saw we were pursued. There were seven horsemen riding like mad after us.

"What did you say in that peroration?" I asked. "you must have offended them."

Flynn had no time to answer. The horsemen were upon us. They dismounted and, led by an old man with a beard, they approached. The old man reached for Flynn's hand and said:

"Young man, I never heard a radical make a speech in my life before. But I heard you and I like you. And I and my six boys will cast our votes for you."

## THE OPTIMIST

IN ALL there were seven or eight years of adversity in Wichita following the collapse of its first boom. That adversity, however, was not a static thing. It had movement. It rose and fell. Even in the long, heart-breaking descent of values before the bottom was reached, small sporadic recoveries inspired hopes for succeeding declines to crush.

Some men survived this refined torture and some did not. Of all the citizens those who suffered most were the builders of buildings. Mr. Sheetz was a builder of buildings. There is no doubt he suffered, much as he tried to conceal it.

He was one of that considerable group of enthusiasts who attach themselves ardently to an embryonic city and who evidence substantially their affection for it by the addition to the city of business buildings. There are many angles psychologically manifest in this passion. Indeed it is a passion. For it is grounded in a grand devotion to the town itself and a profound subscription to its destiny. Back of this and subordinate to it is the impulse to private profit, of course, and back of that possibly the pride of proprietorship and perpetuation of name, and concealed somewhere in it is the desire of popular approval.

So it happens when a town is new that a goodly number of men, choosing this channel as an outlet for their enthusiasm, plan the construction of buildings. The height of the prospective building becomes at once a matter of prime importance. Stories are added ambitiously on paper by the architect and subtracted in brick and mortar with sadness, by the loan agent. But a building is a building, whatever its height, and in the earlier time a great many of the structures which halted at the second story sought to express the full



measure of the builder's spiritual willingness by the addition of an elaborate cornice proclaiming prominently in the pediment the builder's name. If the builder went above the second story and dared a third or fourth, he was disposed to reduce the cornice and omit the name, on the theory that the size of the structure insured its identity. This was in the period before the impersonal corporation, with its division of hazard and glory, entered the building field. It was purely an individual activity.

This activity was at its zenith when the first boom passed. Among those who had planned to build was Mr. Sheetz. But he did not begin to build until all others had ceased. He had a prominent and valuable corner, and he planned, with deep affection, a splendid structure. He spent much time in the architect's office, studying the imposing front elevation, in clean, fine, free lines on glossy onion sheets, making suggestions, pondering alterations, adding something here and removing something there. He stood for the substantial, the enduring, for the simple conventional lines which successfully defy changes in fickle fashion. When the foundation was in and the material was moving, he watched the quality and color of the brick, the deliveries of lumber, and the workmanship. There is an exaltation in this for the builder and Mr. Sheetz sipped joy from his building, as a bee drains the chalice of an apple-blossom of its honey.

This building was well on its way, a temple rising in the midst of piles of brick, lumber and lime barrels, as the storm of adversity, instead of lightening, deepened. I do not now remember the details of the financial handicap which appeared. It did appear, and the half-completed building halted there.

Mr. Sheetz kept a smiling confidence. He had rich friends somewhere, men who would come to his assistance. But his rich friends, apparently, were having

troubles of their own, and construction was not resumed.

After a little while it was plain enough to all his sympathetic fellow-citizens that it would be some time before the building would go forward. Mr. Sheetz did not see it so. Even when the lower story was boarded up and the open windows were temporarily shuttered, to his knowledge, probably at his direction, he brushed the fact aside as not significant.

For it was quite certain that the storm would soon pass. Next week things would be looking up—there was no doubt about it. The bottom had been reached. Next week the turn would come next month. Next month times would be better in the spring. Next spring with such a wheat prospect and a corn crop, things would be booming in the fall. In the fall—next year all would be well again.

In the meanwhile hard times were busy at a tragic harvest. Men who had started with the town and had dreamed its dream, gave up and followed the call of some distant, indefinite prospect. "Give me a ticket to Portland," a departing boomer once said to Mr. Bleckley, railroad ticket agent. "Maine or Oregon?" asked Mr. Bleckley. "Whichever you choose," the desperate boomer replied. "It makes no difference to me." In sore distress many of the stores which had furnished the population for years with food and raiment, reeled before the blast and collapsed, carrying with them trade names which had become household words. Many of the builders lost their buildings, and lived on in the community, with the aid of the name in the pediment, only in memory. .

But Mr. Sheetz did not lose heart. He haunted the corner where the uncompleted building stood. He paused before it and to those who engaged him in conversation spoke hopefully of an early resumption of operations. He was a man of exceedingly hopeful

countenance, given to good raiment, that ordered sartorial equipment which spells prosperity. Merely to survey him was to share his belief that construction of his building would soon begin.

As springs followed winters and autumns followed summers again and again and hopes rose, only to fall, I could see that Mr. Sheetz sounded a more cheerful note than he really felt. This was not to be detected in his attitude, or in his voice or in his raiment. It showed in the weariness in his eyes.

He had an office across the avenue from his beloved building. There at times he sat and gazed upon it. One evening, after a day of high wind and flying dust, I came upon him here. The wind had died away and the dust was settling. Through it dimly floated the disk of the masked sun, like a dull gray agate, and over the city, exhausted with the rigors of the day, rested a cheerless yellow glow, a baneful yellow glow, empty of hope. Before the open window Mr. Sheetz was crumpled down in his chair, asleep. He, too, had tired of hoping. I did not awake him.

There came a time when the storm did lift. There came a year when times were better in the spring. There came a hope that rose and was not crushed. Hard times passed at last and the city moved on and pushed upward.

There, too, came a day when there were strange activities around the uncompleted building. The weather-stained shutters came out and the weather-stained boards came down, and the structure quickly mounted upward to completion.

It is true, I guess, that, during the long dreary days of waiting, Mr. Sheetz's equity in it grew less and less. But when it was finished the weariness went out of his eyes, and, even if his equity in the building was small, after all it was built of his heart and his hope, and it was his.

## AN IMPRESSARIO

Among my visitors, in the newspaper days, was H. G. Toler. He was always welcome. One of the reasons he was welcome, I have now to confess, was that without intention he flattered me.

To understand the manner of this blandishment you must know the surrounding circumstances. Boy and man I had been companion of his sons, and boy and man, I had sued for the approval of Mrs. Toler, a most charming woman, whose culture long added notably to the intellectual life of the town. However, while I enjoyed for years most delightful relations with other members of the Toler family, I did not concern myself with the head of that family until he began to consult me as an expert in the domain of public preferences in entertainment. Thereafter we established an intimacy which lasted as long as he lived.

I have never known a man with a more wholesome adaptability to good fortune and bad, or with a more lively willingness to give whatever came to his hand a trial.

I believe that, in other surroundings, and in another day, with his youth cast in another section, H. G. Toler would have made one of the world's greatest showmen.

The first requirement in a showman is a subtle sense of the public's predilections in entertainment. A great many men think they have this sense, and do not. H. G. Toler believed he had it and he did have it. He believed I had it, and although I was in doubt about it myself, his belief pleased me.

One of the secrets of Toler's showman sense was an unusual knowledge of different kinds of people. His

experience had been so varied that it was a delight to draw haphazard from him incidents in his career.

I have forgotten most of those incidents and remember only the general outlines. He was of an old Virginia family. His father, before the Civil War, was mayor of Richmond. H. G. Toler had worked west very early, and one of his first experiences was to drive a team of six oxen from the Missouri river to the Rio Grande through a hostile country, which made lack of speed a heart-breaking handicap. He won back to the Missouri river, alive, however, and became a printer on one of the first daily newspapers in Kansas City. Later he evolved the idea of traveling salesmanship, and sallied forth over eastern Kansas for a wholesale grocery house, on horseback, with his samples in saddlebags. With the coming of the railroads he dropped the horse and expanded this activity. In this period he found Wichita and after a time came here and went into trade. But trade did not satisfy him. He was searching for his calling. He was a real boomer. He helped found a church and was one of the leading spirits in building the Garfield University. During the boom he followed away an ambitious fancy by which he will probably be longest remembered here. He established an extensive fine stock farm, not far from town. He built great stables, mammoth barns, and a track, and stocked the farm with the best blood of the finest studs in the land. A colt from this farm became once the fastest horse in the world. The brush of hard times swept away the brighter part of the prospects of this enterprise, and Mr. Toler returned to town. He assumed the management of the annual fall fair. While running it he staged a race between the two fast horses, John R. Gentry and Joe Patchin, both foaled in this vicinity. Another year he produced William Jennings Bryan before the largest crowd that orator probably

ever addressed. Eventually Toler took over a great, frame, hexagonal hall known as the "Auditorium". Now this "Auditorium" was an unlovely thing architecturally, but it had curiously that compensation which sometimes goes inexplicably with unlovely structures—it possessed wonderful acoustic properties. Mr. Toler, in the hope of lifting a mortgage from it, brought to this yawning, but sonorous chamber, those great artists who were then available. It was necessary usually to guarantee the artist a certain payment. If the people of the town did not respond to the attraction and fill the house, it was possible to lose a considerable sum of money. The main question then was the problem of popular response. It was in this deceptive field of exploration that Mr. Toler and I became intimate. He knew but doubted; I doubted, but he thought I knew.

"How about Paderewski?" he asked one day. "Can we put him over? I'd like to land a body-blow on that mortgage."

"What's his guarantee?" I asked.

"Twenty-five hundred dollars," he said. "It's too much. The town won't pay the price—not unless it's crazy. Four dollars for those dress circle seats would make 'em dizzy and I'd have to stick that price on back to the twentieth row."

"You might get him for less," I suggested.

"How?" he asked.

"Don't write," I said. "Go and see Paderewski himself. Get by his manager and put it up personally to Paderewski. Tell him you need him."

"That sounds good," said Toler. "Go on."

"Tell him that down here on the prairies is a town full of the most musical people on earth; that they talk, eat, dream music, but that they are very, very poor."

Toler grinned. As a matter of fact, the hard times were over and the town was picking up daily its lost

prosperity. But the memory of what we had been through made the claim of poverty seem real enough.

"Tell him," I said, "that he will have the most appreciative crowd in his career. Tell him that he has got to knock off a thousand dollars."

"I'll do it," said Toler. "Now, can we get the town out, if he agrees?"

"He's the greatest pianist in the world," I said.

"All right," said Toler. "You can do it. I'll get him. But it will take work to get the town. Warm 'em up. Go after 'em hammer and tongs. Make the piano turn somersaults—anything. It's up to you. I'll wire you."

I received the wire. Toler had personally reached the great Pole and had signed him at the lower figure. The next thing was to sell that house.

I do not remember precisely what Toler and I promised the community in the way of a performance. I wrote column after column, and I fear I went to extremes. I fear I had the famous pianist doing things to a piano in the way of tonal fireworks that humanly cannot be done. On the day of the pianist's arrival I was not a little concerned and a little ashamed of the claims I had made for him. I called up Toler and jokingly told him that he must see that Paderewski made good. Thereupon Toler called on the pianist and embellished the narrative as to the community's musical culture, and Paderewski anxiously promised to do his best.

He kept his promise. One look at the old frame auditorium must have confirmed to his mind Mr. Toler's tale. Back-stage he ordered a bucket of hot water, immersed his hands, walked briskly to the piano before a crowded house and played as few of the hundreds of thousands who have listened to him have ever heard him play. I had heard him before in an eastern city

and I heard him afterward many times. I never heard him in such superb and supreme mastery of his art as he showed that night. The crowd knew and was spontaneous, lavish with applause. And to the end of his program the Polish master paid in full and to the limit of his genius.

“It was all right in the box office,” Toler telephoned me that night. “I’ll put that mortgage to sleep tomorrow. But that isn’t all—he sure backed you up with the music.”



## THE VETERAN

OUT on the slope of the hill was a numerous company whom I loved. For almost all those I knew in my youth came here at last to rest in the soothing arms of Silence.

There are graveyards in ancient cities which belong to endless generations of dead. The very antiquity of most of the dead affects all the dead there with a certain anonymity. It was not so here. This graveyard was young, young as the town, young as I. I had seen it as a ragged patch of weedy prairie with a few graves. I had watched it grow by an incessant levy on those who lived and labored and loved around me until my friends who dwelt in silence on the hill outnumbered those who survived with me down in the shallow valley.

Before I had thought seriously of age myself, I found that my memories were more commonly with the dead than with the living. How numerous were the dead! How many, how many of them had carried away with them part of my life, that part of my life that was mine and theirs—the mutual memories that transmute the dull lead of our workaday world into the gossamery fairy gold of fellowship.

Often to me those asleep on the hill were near—but never so near as in spring-time. When the blizzard blew they would scarcely come at my call at all. For the scant snow, whirled by the whining wind through the shivering trees, lashed down upon the winter-flat blue-stem, driven into the ruts of the heavy roads, seemed to separate us. When the leaden day deepened into the pitchy night, and the scourged earth whimpered under the whip of the mad storm, although I thought much upon the hillside dead, they then seemed far away.

When spring came and the warm sun lifted the drowsy grass, and tipped the top-most twigs with green and set the robins singing, when the old drab world came brightly new again, how the dead drew near to me!

For I had known them and they had known me. My memories were theirs a little, and their memories were mine a deal. Most of them were old men who had brought treasure to me out of a rich past. I had brought to them the homage of an eager auditor, a relation, by the by, which makes much for the magic of mutuality.

Most of them were veterans of a great war. Each had carried out of it some thrilling tale of hazard, some account of courage, discounted by modesty, some fragment of philosophy, snatched from the furnace of desperate contest.

For a long, long time these men made up the majority in the town. They were lawyers, doctors, merchants, bankers, traders, workmen and officials. Each one wore a little bronze button. Nearly all of them carried into civil life their military titles. When they were in a majority, there was lively emulation among them for public place and some division into factions. But as the years wore on and their numbers decreased, those who survived drew very closely together. The day of the year to them, above all other days, was Memorial Day. It was in the spring, when the roses were in bloom. In the morning the parade was given, a long line of briskly marching men—in the early days—most of them young, strong soldiers in civilian attire with here and there a blue army overcoat, saved out of the war; in the later days a little uneven line of men with canes and crutches, white-haired and slow-paced. Exercises were held and the graves of their departed comrades were decorated with flowers.

They were a remarkable generation. To a man they all had had a curiously similar experience. After the war they had returned to the home-town or the home-farm in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana or Illinois. But the war had put a restlessness in their blood—it does put restlessness in a man's blood—and the old home-place had in some way lost its charm for them. They left the older states and worked into the new west. Available public land was not the only lure. Many of them came to the growing towns.

I knew most of them in our town, their war stories, their opinions about war, their estimate of generals, their political beliefs and their philosophical deductions on life. Their memories became mine. I rode with Captain Balderston in night forays in Tennessee; I swabbed a cannon with Yank Owen at Shiloh. I dragged myself from the red field of Spottsylvania with Ben Downing; with Captain Kirk I delivered, at the Colonel's tent, thirteen prisoners, taken singlehanded. Those things which were done at Perryville, Corinth, Resaca, Stone River and Kenesaw Mountain, not as they were written in history, but as they fell from the lips of men who were part of the event they witnessed and who gave the cold fact a warm beating heart and leaping blood, all these things were mine, rich booty, to a mind rapacious of moving incident.

There was Dr. De Ross. He was a slender little man with little hands and little feet, thin arms and spindling legs. He wore a long, thin beard. War wearied many men. War palled upon many men. But war could not sate Dr. De Ross. The clash and clamor of the North and South, in conflict, should have dampened the martial fire within his breast. It did not. For after the Civil War he kept on, following the Indian wars in the west.

The force which tramped across the plains and pur-

sued the Crows, recalcitrant in some respect and deserving discipline, was led into a blind gorge of the mountains by the Indians and held prisoner. It was a parlous time, with steady hunger and sporadic showers of poisoned arrows from the cliffs both relentlessly wearing the beleaguered garrison's spirit away. De Ross was wounded repeatedly; he used to show me the long, blue-black scars the arrows had made. He ate, with his comrades, the army harness on hand, and such food, in the way of wild life, as the gorge afforded. "Rattle-snake," he told me, "not bad. Not bad at all." And again, as I questioned him: "Coyote? Yes I tried it. But I gave it up. I could not stomach it."

Dr. De Ross was always in the Memorial Day parade, smaller than the rest, but with his shoulders squared and his step measured and alert. One spring day word came that Dewey had sunk the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. The town palpitated with excitement. Business was suspended and citizens gathered in groups along the avenue. Every one felt the need of some method of celebrating his inward joy. I think Dr. De Ross was the only man who found one.

He went home, put on his army coat and his army hat, buckled his old army sword around his slender waist and came downtown, walked the length of the avenue, without a word, but with military precision, and then went home again.

I never mentioned this to Dr. De Ross. I don't suppose anybody ever mentioned it to him. But we all knew his need and believed he had satisfied it.

When the spring-time comes and a golden haze mantles the hillside, how all the silent ones draw near me, with their memories and mine!

## THE CONTRACTOR

WHEN all other mysteries have been solved, it is to be hoped that some one will delve into the fantastic ways of a population with a building-line. The building-line, to be more specific and certain, marks the distance between the front of a man's domicile and the curb.

Everybody knows that this self-same building-line is a most unstable thing. The ancient eastern towns which were strung along the post road lined their homes on the sidewalk with something akin to fear that the road might escape. As settlement crept westward, this fear seems to have passed and the domiciles were erected some distance from the street. This must have been more or less a national movement. It developed a fancy for what was known in the east as a lawn. For the most part the west with independence rejected this term and called it a front yard, just as the west, with spirit, never accepted piazza as a designation for that which was plainly a porch. Again, in the course of years, there came an almost universal revolt against the prevailing idea of the proper building-line, and with a wonderful simultaneity, those who built homes moved up near the sidewalk again, not, it is true, right to the edge of the sidewalk, but comparatively near it.

These three stages were duly registered in Wichita. The majority of the earlier homes pressed rather closely upon the street. When the first boom was developing, they were set back and displayed an ample front yard. When the revival, which followed the hard times, set in and building began again, the new homes moved up fairly near the sidewalk and contented them-

selves with what were only rudimentary front yards. This was all accompanied by a most remarkable manifestation of popular fickleness about fences. Picket fences were in fashion in the beginning when the homes were close to the street; they grew in number and ornate design when the domiciles receded from the sidewalk, and they fell away and completely disappeared when the dwellings drew near the street again. There seems to be no definite law which a reasoning man can apply to a social phenomenon like this.

Probably that is why E. Woody refused to permit himself to be turned and twisted by the vagaries of humanity. Pre-eminently among the men I studied for a quarter of a century, men I watched in their comings and goings, in speech, dress and action, Mr. Woody traveled on the most even keel. The appealing thing about it all was that the fantasies of the others did not disturb him, and, if I am not wholly mistaken, this was because his own course was completely affirmative—so completely affirmative that he did not need to resist, and therefore did not need to antagonize. It was wholly satisfactory to him for the others to do as they pleased, because it was wholly satisfactory for him to do as he pleased.

Mr. Woody was a carpenter and a contractor. He must have come to us very early and, I imagine, from New England. He was a skillful workman, an adept joiner, a careful contractor, and as honest as the day is long. People who wanted homes built, or porches added, or removed, or windows boarded up to give more bed-space or windows opened to give more light, or incorrigible doors disciplined, or jammed window-weights released, sent for Mr. Woody. He came always in the same way—always. He drove a marvelously sleek, fat horse to a light spring wagon, the bed of which sloped from the front to the rear. Now, in the course

of twenty-five years, he must have changed horses. But you couldn't tell he had changed them. While it wasn't the same horse, it looked the same. Fashion changes vehicles, too, as well as fences. But Mr. Woody's wagon did not change through the years. It could not have been the same wagon all that time, but it looked the same.

So did Mr. Woody himself look the same. I never saw him except in a hat which appeared to be new, and yet it was precisely the same style of hat he had worn as long as I could remember.

Ours is a climate which in season can rasp nerves. But on the hottest day in summer Mr. Woody was as composed as on the coldest day of winter. He was never idle, but he was never in a hurry. He was not taciturn and he was not talkative. He was, superlatively, understanding. Whatever the job presented, he had it measured, while you were still explaining it, and usually he was waiting to give his advice before you had finished.

When the transaction was closed, he moved away as he had come, behind his sleek, fat horse, leisurely. He never was late, and, if he promised, he never failed to appear. His word was his bond, indorsed by an unimpeachable probity.

He was never rich and he was never poor. A great many people around him alternatively rode the flashing crests of fortune and wallowed in the deep troughs of financial woe. But Mr. Woody's sea remained, in the midst of all, miraculously placid.

His home life was beautiful. Mrs. Woody excelled in housewifery as her husband did in carpentry. Their joys mingled and multiplied in the love of a beautiful daughter—Maggie—a fair girl with full-blown roses in her cheeks and dancing spring-time in her eyes.

In the evening Mr. Woody would stable the sleek,

fat horse for the night, would milk an equally sleek, fat cow, and fill a saucer for an equally sleek, fat tabby, and would eat an honest supper, with sauce from a good day's work honestly done, and turn then to a chapter in the Bible, evening prayers, and to the early bed, which schedules work and joy with the rising of the morrow's sun.

So he continued through the year, through good times and bad, through dearth and plenty. He built his home when it was the fashion to have large front yards. It was well back from the street. It was surrounded by a neat picket fence. Being a contractor, he must have noted this fickleness in folks about building-lines and fences. When the town began to boom again, houses to the right and left of his dwelling, moved in solid phalanx up close to the sidewalk and fences came down like ripened grain before the sickle. But the position of his dwelling, out of line, did not worry him. He also kept his picket fence. He did not change.

The world has so much, so much to learn from Mr. Woody.



## THE THINKER

FAR and away the most perplexing problems, as I observed things in my young manhood, were the problems of Labor. I believed, too, that, because they were perplexing, Labor, in the aggregate, was doing more diligent thinking than other elements in the community. Because John Whiteside attacked the general industrial problem on three sides, he was to me one of the most interesting of men. He attacked it on three sides because he was equipped to do so. I can explain what I mean by that by telling you about John Whiteside.

He was a printer. In the old days he stood at the "case", that is, he set type by hand. With the return of prosperity in the land, the "case" passed and gave way to the type-setting machine. One machine could do the work of several men. Therefore, many printers were thrown out of employment, as for seventy-five years preceding many men had been thrown out of employment in all the crafts by new mechanisms.

John Whiteside took up the machine and learned it. He "set" the markets. Formerly there was an advantage in the market "string" in a print shop because the tables were "pick-ups", and the old-time printers "threw" for the markets, that is, decided who should have them by casting dice. This custom passed with the coming of the machines. Thereafter John Whiteside put the markets in type. I think he was the only man in Wichita, who, year in and year out, knew daily the call and commercial money rate, the trend of listed securities, visible supplies, the cotton quotations, exports, receipts of grain and live stock and their prices, as well as the balance in the United

States treasury and the condition of the gold reserve. To a great many men these figures from the market place are hieroglyphics. They were not to John Whiteside. He knew the symbols of trade by heart and their significance by continuous contact with them.

On Sunday John Whiteside went to church. He was never truant. He was not only religious in this sense, but as well in the sense of deep analysis of the spiritual things he felt within himself. In this analysis he was untiring. He searched incessantly that he might find abundantly.

Thus, John Whiteside knew the problems of Labor, for he labored, and he knew trade through long familiarity with its market place, and he realized that spiritual grace alone is the light by which production and consumption and the activities of Labor and Entrepreneur can establish themselves to the reasoning mind as a rational process.

He used to come trudging along early in the evening with his dinner-pail, and often we sat together in the stairway and went into the industrial problem. The charm in John Whiteside's analysis was chiefly, I think, in that it was his own analysis. He avoided the quicksands of general economic definitions where so many daring souls are sucked under. He was chary of the rhapsodical doctrinaires and their fine-spun theories and the agitations of ready augurs. He was interested merely in the facts, and having, with infinite pains, isolated a fact, he essayed to apply it to a principle.

It was evident to him that tool power and process had changed the estate of Labor. It had sub-divided infinitely the task of production; it had multiplied vastly the product; it had enlarged Labor both as producer and consumer. It had brought Labor something Labor had not before; and it had as surely taken away something that Labor once had. It had added to

Labor's creature comforts and at the same time provoked it to articulate discontent. That was one of the three sides of the problem.

It was also evident to him that the Entrepreneur and the commerce which serves him were in a bad muddle themselves, and a muddle which was not to be solved offhand by any one. Tool power and process and accelerated transportation had standardized the product, centralized the market and concentrated the income. The Entrepreneur, overgrown and heavy with his accumulations, had pushed himself into humanity's parlor and sat down as if to remain permanently. The family, fearing for the old furniture, had made a great outcry against this, but the visitor was still there. Perhaps the family could throw him out if it were sure he should be thrown out, but it wasn't quite sure. So there he sat, menacing with monopoly competitive customs as old as the hills, bringing commerce something it had not before and just as surely taking something away that commerce once had, and with a certain reflex on the status of Labor. That was another of the three sides of the problem.

But John Whiteside was most interesting in his analysis of the problem from its spiritual side. Whatever the perplexities of Labor, following a change in its status, whatever the complexities of commerce, attendant upon revolution in its methods, man does not live by bread alone. There is his soul. It is exalted by discipline. Self-denial magnifies it. Sacrifice sanctifies it. The coveted creature comfort, won by dint of demand, may injure a man by softening him. The attainment of success, expressed in accumulation, may injure a man by hardening him.

We had, between us, some great deliberation about the soul—did John Whiteside and I. He had a manner that appeared timid, when as a matter of fact, he

was not. He merely was not assertive. He was too anxious to get at the truth to admit dogma. He excluded, too, emotion as tending to obscure the facts and he eschewed mysticism.

He was slow of thought, slow of speech, but certain in both. He could not be spiritually indifferent. Man had a soul or he had not. John Whiteside attested the soul. A man's soul! White fire in the heart of the spirit, sacrosanct, isolate, inarticulate, incandescent at the touch of the True, dull at the breath of the False, leaping at the call of Right, shrinking from the demands of Wrong, quickening before Faith, recoiling before Reason, advancing always to the Shadows, retreating always before Substance. A man's soul—a shining center around which life and the reason for life revolve, and without which life and the reason for life must cease to be. So it is, and so it must be, part of every problem.

So John Whiteside believed that solution for the problem of Labor did not follow a view of the material aspects of Labor and Capital alone, however intimate that view. There was no composing the industrial woes of the time without a view of the soul. For in the soul of every man is found the solution of every problem. This was another of the three sides of the problem.

There was an ultimate resolution of the whole difficulty—that he did not doubt. Man would think it out. He was helping to think it out himself. So he lifted his patient eyes to the glimmering light ahead and trudged on toward it, content to be traveling the long, slow journey from discord, violence and hate to brotherhood, peace and love.

I can hear him now quoting in his peculiar, non-assertive way, the line, as if he were setting it up in type, so slowly, so without ritual accent, that it seemed

his own: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

I can see him now, picking up his dinner-pail at the end of our diet in the stairway, and trudging patiently upstairs to his clicking machine and his nightly communion with the jargon of the market place, thinking, thinking, thinking.

## A HERALD

WHEN one lives long in a town he needs no time-piece. The habits of the citizens are sufficient clock. Whenever from my office window I saw Clint Hellar, night-watchman, trudging homeward, wan in the dawning day, it was five o'clock.

Whenever John Reynolds at the mill unhooked the bookkeeper's visor from his ears, lifted his coat from its peg and set out home for dinner, it was thirty minutes after eleven. This was an odd dinner hour, a bit out of harmony with community custom, but it was John Reynolds' dinner hour, and he kept it with chronometric certainty.

Likewise, when Dan Parks, policeman, came to the corner, paused, turned the corner and pegged slowly down his beat, twirling his club, it was six-thirty. Precisely thirty minutes thereafter a little way down the avenue, two little old men, the Ketcham brothers, drew their chairs out on the sidewalk in front of the store and sat there, with the door between them, in silence.

And when the day had beat itself out in pulsing pinks and fluttering yellows in the west and shadows had crept into the stairways and the east had offered a single naked star, and there wailed through the deserted streets, the sound of a distant cornet, it was thirty minutes past seven o'clock, post meridian. The Salvation Army was moving to its daily assault upon sin.

Some in the army were permanent figures. Some were ephemeral. The pre-eminently permanent were the bass-drummer and the guitarist. Mr. Chaffee had the bass-drum for years. I knew him as a sexton of a church when I was a boy. He was a little man with very short legs and with a very large head which was exaggerated in size by extremely abundant and bushy

hair. There was a stolid imperturbability in his performance on the bass-drum which always fascinated me. The guitarist, for many years, was Mr. Graybill. He had been a school-mate in former years. I had lost track of him for a period, after the school days, and when I saw him again I was startled and puzzled to find him quite gray, although he was still a young man. He was an earnest, devout soul.

As a youth I had been witness to the arrival of the Salvation Army. The army being strange, the police brutally assaulted it. The indignation I felt as a boy was expressed immediately by the whole community, and thereafter the Salvation Army was fostered in its unique and indispensable service in the town. Its good work was rewarded in many ways, but by no richer return than the unqualified approval of the citizens.

Some of the active Salvationists were ephemeral, as I have said. On different occasions I saw distressed mothers with their little girls in the kneeling circle. They would be there a few evenings and then disappear. Occasionally a sweet-faced girl, sent out from the east to hearten the workers, would come and sing her song of praise to the evening star for a few nights and pass on and away. Sometimes a cowboy from the range, changed by the magic of a mighty spiritual grace, would step to the center and exhort, and vanish. Once in a while a rescued workingman, who had been down and out, offered his thankful testimony on the street in the hope that some sick soul might hope again. He too would pass on.

One of those who came and remained a while was a fair-faced boy who played the cornet. Plainly, sin had no claims upon him. His was a spiritual concord which had known no preceding spiritual discord. He was devout because it was his nature to be devout. His name was Pearl Titus.

If I remember aright, young Titus was an orphan. He was poor. He, too, passed. Down on the avenue was a recruiting station for the regular army of the United States, with a sergeant, an insinuating, persuasive, unanswerable sergeant in charge. He induced Titus to enter the service, and, pawning his watch and whatever other trifling property he had, Titus went into the west a soldier, forgotten by all here except his friends in the Salvation Army.

One day the wires flashed around the world the name of Pearl Titus. It didn't mean much to the majority of people in Wichita. It meant much to the Salvationists. For he was their Pearl Titus.

The news dispatch which carried his name was the historical telegram which told of the march of the troops of the western world upon the capital of the Orient, Peking. Within the ancient city the diplomatic representatives of the Occident were beleaguered, surrounded by a wild horde of Orientals seething in fanaticism, gone mad with barbaric reversion to racial hate, and, encouraged by a bigoted dynasty, bent on carrying out that age-old plan of destruction the East has always nursed against the West. Cowering in their compounds, under the shriek of shell and roar of cannon, the nationals had waited long for the rescuing armies of America and Europe. At last these armies were on the way. At last they had reached the towering walls of Peking. Before the walls was the West, behind them the East.

Under orders, a slight figure issued forth from the United States troops and began to mount, inch by inch, the great walls. It was Pearl Titus—the first man of the allied armies in the Boxer rebellion on the walls of Peking.

When he returned to America he was ordered to Washington. The President, in recognition of his ex-



plot, if my recollection is not at fault, nominated him for West Point, the national military academy, a privilege of reward in exceptional cases the President enjoys.

I do not now remember whether young Titus accepted the nomination, or if he did, whether he remained at West Point. As we gathered in Wichita, he was of that temperament which did not quicken under the attention he had won, but remained indifferent rather to the opportunities his citation opened to him. I do not know his subsequent history.

But I do know that no man could have scaled that wall that day without a thrill, probably without expression in such a temperament as Titus', but a thrill nevertheless.

For when the boy stood alone on the high wall that day he was the herald of the new Occident, sounding its answer to the ancient hate of the old Orient. He was picking up the glove that Atilla threw at the feet of Theodosius fifteen hundred years before. He was, in a deeper sense, delivering the doctrine of order, progress and justice from Palestine to Peking, and bringing home to Asia the power and the glory and the ultimate beneficence of Christianity.

Whether or not young Titus identified his thrill that day, that night his friends of the Wichita Salvation Army, at precisely thirty minutes after seven, came down the avenue, the cornet clamoring with renewed fervor and Mr. Chaffee, whose brother, General Chaffee, led the American troops to Peking, pounding the big bass-drum with added energy,

## THE CRUSADER

ONE day Carrie Nation came to town. This was during my newspaper days. Carrie Nation hated the town's saloons and came to physically destroy them. They flourished in her sight in defiance of the laws of Kansas, and she was deeply offended. In an hour she underwent a marvelous change. Her purpose to physically destroy these particular saloons turned into a giant decision to destroy, by a dramatic use of a symbol of force, the saloon everywhere.

The difference is that between the impact of a tack-hammer and a drop-forge.

Of course, I may be mistaken in my analysis of her. If she did indeed find her larger vision here, it is possible to understand how it came about only by knowing what happened to her that day her name flashed around the world and instantly became familiar to the nation.

A considerable period before her notable trip to Wichita she had been modestly following certain kindly impulses of her own, and in her own way. It was her wont to equip herself with a small hand organ and rolls of perforated music sheets, and so outfitted, to visit the jail and to talk with the prisoners, play for them and pray over them. Hers was a great charity, in truth, and a great faith. In the pursuit of this gentle service a saloon at Kiowa, a border town, provoked her indignation, and she attacked it, smashing its equipment. It was an illicit place, but publicly tolerated. The community brushed the attack aside humorously, and kept the incident to itself.

Now, when Carrie Nation came to Wichita, later, undoubtedly she had decided upon a repetition of this manner of protest. There were a number of saloons

here, existing in face of the law, but publicly tolerated. Carrie Nation hated them and came to destroy them. But probably she thought too much upon it. For at first she did not attack as she had planned. She went out among the saloons at night and prayed. She believed, with all her heart, in the power of prayer. I have always believed she was praying that night for strength, strength to cease thinking, strength to act.

I do not suppose there is any adequate comprehension of Carrie Nation without consideration of the quality of Action. In its simplest term, Action is adventure—a human being at grips with Fate. Desire puts no issue to the test in this world—no more does resolution. They and their fluttering broods of designs and decisions have a relation to Action, it is true, but the relation is at best remote. For Action, when it is Action, is disconnected and detached, subsisting at the heart of the moment, with no footway to the future and no bridge to the past.

Carrie Nation did not act that night. She prayed. But late in the afternoon of the next day she had desire, design, decision and resolution behind her, and she acted.

She was a short, round, rubicund woman, past middle age, very motherly, very serene, very plain in dress. With her tiny bonnet fastened securely and a few large rocks caught up in her capacious apron, she walked sedately into a prominent saloon, and with a deliberation reflecting her determination, smashed its mirrors, bottles and glassware.

She was immediately arrested. At once she suffered a reaction from her daring, and showed a docile resignation. Possibly desire and design, decision and resolution were back again in her mind holding hot debate. But she had done what she had done and she was ready to suffer the penalty.

At the jail, this was her attitude until her friends of the Women's Christian Temperance Union arrived. They showed not only sympathy, but indignation, and almost at once unbounded admiration for her courage. Quickly upon the heels of this stimulating approval came the exaltation of unexpected release. Those in authority had ruled that she could not be held.

She left the jail triumphant. A crowd had gathered. It followed her down the avenue, a noisy concourse, partly curious, partly agape at her audacity. But the approval in the jail, her release, and the attention of this crowd, were working changes in Carrie Nation's mind greater than had been worked there in all her life before. Action had been indorsed by friend, law and populace. Design and decision had been utterly condemned. She turned and bowed to the crowd. The crowd cheered. She was smiling broadly now. She asked a reporter at her side what he thought the size of the crowd was. He told her he estimated it at a thousand. Her gratification glowed. "Isn't it fine?" she exclaimed.

In this mood she was probably seeking still for indorsement of Action. She had hated the saloons and had desired to destroy them. Now she hated the institution and had determined to destroy it. Her weapon henceforth was to be Action—wielded not in a corner of a single state, but in the entire nation.

In the days that followed she evidenced to me and my newspaper friends a curious mental struggle. Design and decision were not to be dismissed so lightly. They demanded audience for their arguments against Action. There were moments when they prevailed and then Carrie Nation was singularly cold and confused. There were moments, as well, when she sought impatiently the stimulation of the deed, and then Carrie Nation was the impetuous Crusader the world pictured

her to be. The second or third day in Wichita, she invited her friends to the smashing of a saloon at six o'clock in the afternoon. But this was design, and without notifying her friends, she re-allied herself to Action and smashed it at four.

Before she set out for the eastern cities to continue her campaign, the business of her crusade bulked large and must have distressed her. The crusade, too, had taken on tawdry trappings. Most of them she discarded. The suggestion of some dramatic soul, that she use a hatchet, was adopted, and it became her symbol. But in the first intrepid rites at the shrine of Action she did the undramatic thing and used rocks.

Just as Crusade must have its creaking machinery, so does Renown. And while she never knew it, Carrie Nation's introduction to the outside world was achieved; it did not happen.

Late in the afternoon, my fellow newspaper man, David Leahy, came to me and said: "Here is the best story that ever happened in this town and we can't get a line of it out. We've tried Chicago and New York, and they don't peep."

Victoria, the great queen of England, had passed away and the wires of the world were crowded with the dispatches relating to her demise. The Wichita correspondents had bombarded in vain the city newspapers with skeleton accounts of this strange local episode. The editors would not order the story.

The winter day closed. The town prepared for bed. David Leahy still mourned over a national journalism that didn't recognize real news. At last he came upon a plan. He queried all the eastern newspapers again, and added the invention that Carrie Nation had employed Jerry Simpson, the sockless statesman, as her attorney. The eastern newspapers did not know Carrie Nation. But they did know Jerry Simpson. They

ordered the story. In an hour they were doubling their order; in two hours trebling it. The next morning Carrie Nation, crusader, was on every front page in America.

The contagion of news is a curious thing, but not so curious as the fortuity of its selection. Such slender sleight gave Carrie Nation to the outside world. Jerry Simpson was not an attorney.

## THE CAPTAIN

No MAN has ever excited my interest in greater degree than Cy Leland. I saw him first at the state capital when I was a boy and I decided then, as a boy decides such things, that I was in the presence of a Cortez or a De Soto, in worsted, that is a Captain, who, in another day, would have plunged to adventure with such courage that his own troop, fearing to follow, would have followed in fear of him.

Cy Leland possessed two qualities which I have not seen surpassed in any other man—decision and dispatch. Every speech of his was a conclusion, and his disposition was to close a deal at the same meeting he opened it.

At that time he was not yet known over the state as a leader. Later when he came to Wichita to a state convention where he was the dominating figure I had opportunity to study him at close range. It was the night before the opening contest and the struggle to gather in the last unattached and unpledged delegates was at its height. Leland sat in his room at the hotel in the midst of his lieutenants. The last of these had reported and there was much discussion as to certain delegations and some confusion of plan. When at last Leland spoke, all turned to hear his final direction for the following day. He gave it in a word. He did not analyze his position or elaborate it. His word was a decision and his decision an order. There was no posture in this. His long silence broken only by this utmost brevity of speech, in a mumbling monotone, was the attitude of a chance spectator casually interested.

In the still later period of which I am writing he long had been confirmed as a leader and condemned as a boss. Remembering my early classification of him as a Cortez born out of time, I again studied him for any new and unique angle he might display to me. In doing this I made it my business to find out something about his life. This required private inquiry, for while most of the public men of that day were presented in more or less dramatic biographies, Cy Leland never was. He might or he might not have approved of any such thing. Probably he would have been utterly indifferent to it. Be that as it may, he was a very capable soldier in the Civil War. He had always been active in public affairs. He had farmed successfully, and was the owner of a big general store in a county seat.

Now, the first thing I learned about political leadership in my youthful observations of Cy Leland was that all other things being equal, the man who controls in politics is the man who is best informed. Cy Leland made it a business to know the situation. As men discovered his capacity to receive information and to keep it, they carried their news to him with increasing enthusiasm. At the state capital he was closeted most of the day, listening to callers; when he again came into public view, at dinner, some one was certain to be whispering into his ear; at night, groups of men would sit for hours waiting the opportunity to reach him in his conquistadorial corner of the hotel corridor and impart to him some fragments of rumor each believed he should know before he slept. I never knew how this was brought about, but I noticed that he talked to men singly, and never in groups.

The second discovery I made about political leadership as exemplified in Cy Leland was that he rarely gave out information. This traffic in political infor-



mation is usually a reciprocal affair. It is stimulated and thrives among most men because it is a mutually advantageous exchange of news and views. Apart from monosyllabic comments, Cy Leland took no part in the trade. I doubt if he had any philosophy in regard to this. Rather, I should say, it was an instinctive recognition that in politics information is not information unless it is complete, and when it is common property it ceases to be information. That is only another way of saying what every newspaper man knows: that news is at its highest value when only one man possesses it, and that it ceases to be news when he has told it.

The third observation I made of Cy Leland's leadership was his use of the information he so collected. He applied it in the most practical way by using it as an aid in determining the interest of the individual. For in politics, while it is not an invariable rule, it is generally true that a man's action follows his interest. A great deal of the clamor of old-time politics arose out of the circumstance that many men gauged their fellows by their verbal expressions. It was never possible to square the event with the expressions which preceded it. Similarly many men measured their fellows by their motives, which on occasion proved quite opposite to their expressions. But motive was not always a safe means for measuring the actions of men. For, on occasion, men, given to sudden passions and quick recoveries, changed in their motives. When they did so change they were actuated usually by the impulse of interest. This is not saying that interest always impelled men in the old-time politics. It did not. But it is saying that it was the most certain guide in determining what a man would do in a given situation. I believed that Cy Leland forecast the movements of men not by what they said or what he believed their

motives to be, or even by their actions in the past, but by their interest, as far as he could fathom that interest from his warehoused information which was everybody's property in its fragments, but, assembled, his alone.

As Cy Leland grew in power in the state, it seemed to me that there was a curious atrophy in him of the most natural impulse in politics—that of personal aspiration to public place. It is quite possible that I may be mistaken here, but the leadership which he had attained seemed to engross him. His leadership was challenged, of course. If the challenge had been directed to his own candidacy for office, his development might have been different. It was, instead, directed against his control, and therefore was to him a challenge of his ability to control. In the ensuing contests he laid about him with great vigor, employing against any false friend as heavy a weapon as against a known enemy. So the impeachment spread about the state that Leland was "vindictive," the real word being apparently too short to be satisfyingly descriptive. It was during one of these contests that I found myself alone with Cy Leland in the corner of the corridor. He knew me as a young newspaper man.

It was after midnight and he was very weary. But he straightened up and looked through me when I told him that he was playing a game that, in the long run, could not be won. I explained that in my belief no one could permanently control men through organization, and that he was certain ultimately to lose. He neither affirmed nor denied this dictum. But he was not amused, as he had a right to be, with so solemn a pronouncement from so callow a youth. So I went on. I told him that he ought to drop the losing game of personal politics and go in for the championship of

political principles. There was more chance to win. He surprised me by blurting out, suddenly:

"What for instance?"

"Suffrage for women," I said, "and all these new propositions in politics."

"Do you think that suffrage can carry in Kansas?" he asked.

"No," I answered. "Not now. But if you champion it when it can't win, you share in its strength when it does win. You share then in the prestige of a triumphant principle. When you win in personal politics you add to the number of your enemies and inspire new jealousies among your friends."

"Where do you get this?" he asked bluntly.

"Out of the air," I said. "For it is in the air. Times are changing in Kansas."

"You may be right," he said, with all the solemnity in the world, and with a great kindness in his eyes. "You may be right."

I came away from him still sitting in his corner and I felt that he was tagging my information with a very plain tag and adding it to his store.

## THE HISTORIAN

SOME men are individually distinct in everything—in method of thought, action, attitude, speech, penmanship. Given their thought anonymously and you can name them. Hear of their action without identification and you are sure of its source. Their speech is as certain a key to their identity as their countenance, just as their penmanship is their own beyond all legal power of protection in trade-marks.

There are such men. They are rare, but there are such—and among them the one my memory holds most clearly is Kos Harris. Occasionally there would come to my newspaper desk a letter addressed to the editor. The chirography was always the same—a bold, open script, with something inherently mandatory about it. The script identified its author as completely as if it had been examined by counsel on the other side, marked “Exhibit A” and admitted. No counterfeiter on earth could have simulated it. It was not merely a letter from Kos Harris. It was Kos Harris himself, in as substantial a presence and as truly as his own form in the door.

The letter, more often than not, dealt with some lively reminiscence of the town’s history, and always there were two towering features to the letter which gave character and scale to the whole of it. I fear I make a poor fist at describing them. The first feature was the letter’s unconscious protest against the pitiable limitations of language. The second was an impression from the letter that the sketch it carried was a fragment of a complete history. Perhaps I may clarify that a bit if I should describe first, not the letter, but the writer thereof. He was to be found

in one of two places as a rule—either in his law office or in his library at home. For when night fell, Kos Harris crept in among his books and delved—more than any man in Wichita. I often called on him there, and found him barricaded behind bastions of books, with Grote, Gibbon, Green, Guizot, Macaulay, Prescott and Motley in toppling array on his right hand, and Montaigne, Goethe, Carlyle, Emerson and their kind in zig-zag phalanx on his left.

In the course of the town's history, and through its various stages of growth, decline and revival, Kos Harris held to this sanhedrim of great minds. In the early time he was, during the day, a whole-hearted participant in the exciting affairs of the frontier town, keenly observant and keenly appreciative of the incidents that enliven a pioneer people, in and out of court, in business, politics and love. But when the stars came out, he convoked from the printed page his young friend Alexander sighing at the Ganges; comrade Caesar doing much writing and a little fighting in Gaul, Alva, Cortez, Cromwell and the Corsican. When the boom had come and gone he struggled through the day with the rest to keep up hope and worked with the best to win back prosperity, but at sundown he gathered Montaigne, Carlyle and the others around him and heard their troubles, and declining to worry over theirs, ceased to worry over his. When the hard times passed and the town, with a new lease of life, went bounding on to the fulfillment of its dream of destiny, Kos Harris rejoiced in the new abundance and shared in it during the day. But in the evening he settled down among his books, not happier with them than with men, but as happy and in a different way.

When I called upon him among his books for some missing chapter in a local news story involving a past event, how he came to the edge of his chair, erect, alert,

electric, with an instant and unerring recollection. Who having seen him at such a moment, can ever forget how he held his cigar by the tip of its tapering end at the precise center of his lips? Who can ever forget the sudden openness of his eyes and the world of laughter sparkling there as he supplied the missing incident?

For he kept account of the town for the sheer pleasure of it. He knew the public need and personal deed which make the warp and woof of community life. But he knew more—the often obscure urge behind the public need and the often unrevealed motive behind the personal deed which is the yarn crossing and criss-crossing, through the fabric that runs from the roaring loom of every man's town. He knew, too, there is much that can not be told, much that in conscience must not be told, much that, as we are saved by the amenities, no man will tell. No history ever was, no history can ever be complete.

That brings me back to Kos Harris' letters and their two curious characteristics. The first, you will remember, was their unconscious protest on the score of language limitations. No printed record of a fact ever really satisfies. The fault is in the instrument. The letter A was an eagle with the Egyptians; the trading Phoenicians, seeking a more simple book-keeping character pulled off the feathers and left the legs and the beak. The Greeks gave it a name. The Romans shortened that name by a syllable and printed it as we do, in its present form. But we have six different ways of pronouncing it. So generally in the conveyance of thought, spoken language has fifty advantages where printed language has one. Kos Harris in his letters to the editor always did his best to overcome this handicap. He wrote himself down as a man speaks. He underscored here, he capitalized there, he broke a sentence with a dash and left it incomplete—he marshalled a

row of exclamation points with each succeeding one larger, blacker and more exclamatory—all in a brave attempt to get to his reader the shade of his meaning, the color of his thought, the emphasis of his conviction, the burden of the thing said and, most important, the bearing of the thing left unsaid. It is thus man speaks. Thus he is heard. But though he may write so, he can not so be read. I always sorrowed for Kos Harris when I passed his letters on to the printers. For the democratic little types are cruel tyrants over aristocratic copy like his.

The second characteristic of his letters was the impression they gave that the single event they portrayed had been taken from a larger context. That is to say, there existed somewhere a complete history of the town and this was an excerpt from the work.

In this world no event begins and ends of itself. An incident is born of another, and dying, gives birth to a third. Woven around every community is a cloak made of these dove-tailed successions of incidents, and that which happens today is in a way part of that which happened a half-century ago.

Many men have recorded successfully the succession of events in nations. A few have recorded it successfully for provinces and states. How few have ever succeeded in recording it for towns.

But often as I read Kos Harris' local historical sketches sent in to the editor, I wondered if there was not hiding in his library, somewhere among the other chronicles, a manuscript history of Wichita, continuous, connected and complete, done with infinite detail, keen analysis and great good humor, waiting patiently the printers and presses of posterity. I half-suspect it yet.

## THE RAILROADER

IN THE locomotive cab of the first train to reach Wichita was Al. Glazier. The locomotive was a black monster with a smoke stack, in form like a huge inverted boot, which vomited unbelievably black, frothing volumes of smoke back into the face of the engineer. When he had stabled his steed, Glazier washed his face and hands, and after the manner of a railroad man coldly surveyed the town.

That is, Glazier didn't think it was much of a town. In all probability he didn't think it would ever be much of a town. He had been running into new towns for some time, and he was perfectly aware that all the towns could not possibly make good their several pretensions. Therefore he automatically discounted all town claims.

In all probability, as well, Glazier did not care whether it would ever make much of a town. He indulged in no speculative fancies based on local enthusiasms.

Other men came into the new country, chose a town, subscribed to the community's articles of faith, and had no other town before it. Al. Glazier went to many towns, chose none of them, and was not so fancy free as he was wholly indifferent. This was perfectly natural. If a man sees only one town day after day, and hears only the praises of one town, and only the arguments in support of that town's certain future, he is likely to become biased about it. But if a man sees many towns every day, and hears the praises of all of them and arguments in support of all the towns' certain destinies, the thing palls on him.



Now, moreover, Glazier was the representative of a corporation and that may have helped to give him an air of detachment. For a corporation in those days was, in identity, a remote thing and an illusory. I did not understand the corporation, and I found that few people did. It was a giant in attack, but a phantom against attack. That was about all anyone could discover about a corporation.

It seems that historically a corporation was once a thing set up by a state with extreme caution. This was originally done by granting, in exceptional instances, a special charter. Everybody in those days grew greatly excited over the proposition of creating just one corporation. Some violently opposed the proposition. Some as violently advocated it. Then, when at last the special charter was granted, those who had been opposed accused those who had advocated it of corruption. In time those who advocated special charters grew weary of this accusation, arose in revolt, and thereafter the states granted charters wholesale. With the rest Kansas opened the doors wide. Since that time people have been having a vexatious time with corporations, and in my young manhood, they fretted sorely about them, but to no purpose. There was a perpetual complaint against overcapitalization, for instance. Under a state charter corporations were obliged to issue stock for value only. They didn't as a rule. They issued stock for assets arbitrarily valued, which is quite a different thing. This sounds illusory. It is illusory. It is the way of corporations to be illusory.

About the only corporations visible to Wichita in the old days were the railroads. For twenty-five years or so the town had, upon occasion, two grand passions, the first to get more railroad corporations attached to it and the second to grow inflamed over the attitude

of the railroad corporations after the town had got them.

The reason for this seeming contradiction was perfectly natural. The proposition was to build a city. The first requisite in that recipe was a railroad. The second requisite was another railroad; the third requisite another. The town which could draw to itself the most railroads, would become the city. The proposition seemed sound and was universally accepted. Therefore, all towns went in for railroads. In a general way the advantage of a single railroad was subject to considerable doubt. As the single railroad approached a given center and passed it, creating new towns, a single railroad scattered rather than concentrated business. Therefore a second railroad was necessary to give the center an advantage over one-railroad towns, and a third railroad to keep the center ahead of two-railroad towns. But as the railroads were accumulated, the town, which was becoming a city, discovered that it had taken to its bosom corporations, and the way of corporations was past finding out. In the first place, the various railroads did not respond to the principles of competition, as the population had hoped, in rates and in other services. In the second place, the corporations, not revealing any great enthusiasm for this particular town, were suspected of intrigues with other and rival towns, in the way of discriminations, rebates and special assistance of divers kinds. Thereupon the town would set out to enforce its demands upon the railroads and discover that demands can not be enforced upon phantoms. After a season of indignation, therefore, the town could gird up its loins and go out to get another railroad.

This proposition, I say, seemed sound. For the theory was that the town, by accumulating railroads

would finally become a city and attract the railroad which was accumulating cities.

This was the evolution which peopled the prairie west and spangled it over with villages and jeweled it with great towns. For thirty years the railroads were not only gigantic funnels through which population poured out on the plains, but also the Merlin wand which wrought the towns and called the spirits from the vasty deep of man's imagination to fashion for himself majestic market-places.

It was a tremendous task, achieved with rare vision and prodigious industry, and with what equity its magnitude, its enthusiasm and its haste permitted. The railroad corporation, uncontrolled by its creator, created that which it could not control—an empire.

Al. Glaizer, more than any man I have known, saw it all. Indeed, I sometimes think that he and his kind were the only part of the corporation which did see it all. Surely the railroad president who came through the town and from the glass-encased observation platform of his special car, cast a languid eye over the native population at the station, yawned, and lighted a fresh cigar to emphasize his poise—even to the natives—did not see it all. Surely the financiers in London, or New York, who pondered over the map and thought of this section in terms of tonnage in wheat and kine and minerals did not see it all.

They did not, they could not see it as Al. Glazier did. For he saw it in terms of farms, ranches, towns and cities, in terms of mills, elevators, warehouses and stock yards, and most of all, in terms of men, women and children. As an engineer, he drove the first trains into the town. Afterward as a conductor, he punched the tickets, and inserted the hat-checks of hundreds of thousands of passengers making their way into the new countries.

Whether they went into towns which remained towns, or into towns which became cities, or out on the "claims" which became homesteads or out to the ranches which became farms, they passed under the eye of some Al. Glazier.

In the rocking coaches he worked his way, his lantern in the crook of his elbow, his visored cap well-down over his eyes, his spectacles hanging perilously near the end of his nose, shaking out the long snake of a ticket, perforating it and handing it back, silent, tireless, grim, and, as he proved himself once notably, in a hold-up in Oklahoma, brave.

His run stretched entirely across the new country. Man, woman and child passed under his eye and through his hands out into the empire which they builded of their labors and their loves—a land teeming with surplus fuel and food and raiment for all the world, but—more—a land of dreaming builders forever unwearied of dreaming and building.

Years afterward Al. Glazier visited me in the newspaper office and told me of his first trip to Wichita in the locomotive cab. "It didn't look much of a town, that day, to tell the truth," he said, "but what a splendid city it has become."

## THE FARMER

So THE city was built. The whole of it was wizardry. Vision, fever, collapse, convalescence in succession and the thing was done, in less than thirty years, a Rome built in a day.

Some of those who walked its streets during those thirty years have here passed before you. Now that we are to take leave of them and the era in which they builded, perhaps the perspective may be improved if we withdraw a space and look back.

In the old days the way out of town was over a paved thoroughfare, extended beyond urban need. This dwindled to a dirt street with grass invading the gutters, and this in turn narrowed to a country road with dusty ruts and tufty center. A little way out along this road, was Frank Yaw's farm, and in the midst of a field usually was Frank Yaw, farmer.

Passing this way, I watched him laboring in the morning sun, and for respite, straightening his back against the weight of sixty years, and standing so, turning his eyes to the city, its filigreed spires imbedded in the blue sky, its turrets, towers and lofts awash in a sea of sunshine and greenery.

Frank Yaw loved the soil, and more, he was constant in his love. He could not be false to it. The current which ran madly, resistlessly cityward for years neither dislodged him nor disquieted him. Against the attacks of the one overwhelming epidemic of his time, he remained immune. So far as the most striking product of this time, the city, was concerned, he kept the normal perspective. This was the farmer's perspective, without which I am convinced there can be no adequate survey of this era.

Frank Yaw was a short, stocky man with a bushy head of hair, a tangly, wiry beard, big, capable hands, and a strong body. He had that understanding about animals, which is something more than knowledge and not much less than instinct. He had a deep intimacy with plant-life, and its everlasting play at pollenization and persistence in perpetuation. But he loved most that Waste which is the mother of all Wealth, the soil, and the soil which was his own he knew with fast affection as a mother knows her first-born, inch by inch. Such a man could have no division in his love. He was irrevocably a farmer.

For that reason his view of the city and the most striking phenomenon of that day, the social spectacle of associated effort, was worth while. For the social spectacle was only partially visible to those who were part of it. It was seen much more clearly by one who stood a little away from it, as a man may better judge the swiftness of a stream from the bank than from the deck of a steamer moving with the current.

From my conversations with Frank Yaw, I judged he had given much thought to the phenomenon, and had come to much clear analysis of it. He could do this because he was unaffected by the influences which surcharged the air he breathed. Many neighbors deserted the farms to live in town. Many young men and women left the countryside for college and returned, not to the farm, but to the city. Around him he noted the movements which proved that a mighty magnet was drawing the population together. There were farmers, like himself, who did not feel this pressure, but who watched its effect on others curiously. They did not deny the lure of the city, the lure of light and life, of quick fortune, of high estate, the lure of leisure wed to luxury, a union fecund of multitudinous litters of their like. Plainly the lure was

there. But they did not feel it. What was infinitely more interesting to Frank Yaw, than the acknowledged lure of the growing city, was the effect of concentration upon humankind.

Frank Yaw, at best, could only guess at the workings of the law of association. No man of this generation probably may do more than guess. Much of the process is still in the lap of the gods. Some of the effects are fairly determinable in towns which are finished. Virtually none at all may be isolated in cities which are still forming. If generalizations are possible, one is this: A city is not the sum of its individuals; it is a union of its individuals. The aggregate is a mass personality. This personality in a community may be stronger than that of any individual in the community, indeed it is quite possible that in a given community, every individual who adds strength to the community through association, becomes, although stronger as one of a group within the association, something individually less. Another possible generalization is this: An association of individuals which concentrates upon the single purpose of a group within the association—as the will to increase the size of a city—and gains momentum by holding to the purpose, generates a power of accretion which at once increases momentum and multiplies power.

There must be a limitation in this law, of course. These men and women of whom I have written here, were not confronted by the limitation. Each added his will, his thought, his energy to the common effort, and in union they did that which the same individuals acting separately or in groups not in accord, could not have done—they built a city. In another age another people, responding to a law of association, piled

the pyramids, and in another time, other peoples with the same impulse reared the cathedrals.

Pre-eminently the chief expression of this time, then, was the building of a city. Frank Yaw understood the building inspiration. He did not begrudge those who reveled and prospered in the work their pleasure and their profit. He did not repine over the apparent decline of the basic institution. He was not cynical over the cheap concern of sympathetic statesmen. He kept on farming. Tillage is ancient, honorable, and indispensable. There are times when it seems to be rejected, but always it becomes at last the head of the corner. There is no other way. There can be no other way. The soil remains the open sesame to food, raiment and roof. There is no other.

So through the years Frank Yaw turned the sandy loam, watched the gentle kine in the pasture, the golden apples and painted peaches in the orchard, listened to the chancicleer, the flutter of the thrush, heard, not seen, in the hedge row, the lament of the dove, the globuled notes from meadow-larks. To him loving the soil, each year was a birth, each Spring's coming in a resurrection when withered Winter's mummy breasts, at the touch of the sun, filled and flushed, floral with the wine of life.

So I watched him as he paused in his work and straightened and turned his eyes to the spires of the city. His was a good perspective. They builded. He delved. They would not delve. Nor would he build. But men must delve. So men must build. And whether they delve or build, they are, after all, delvers and builders both, just folks.













UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



101 030

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY